Chapter Ten

Bayreuth and Nazism

BY AUGUST 1918 the final German offensive in the West had ground to a halt and the Kaiser's armies, exhausted and outnumbered, were forced to retreat, sustaining heavy casualties. Germany's allies, Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria, were on the brink of collapse, while the Turkish front buckled and gave way under the pressure of new assaults. This caving in of the German war fronts triggered a rapid sequence of changes within the Reich. The military, fearful of a complete rout, insisted upon an immediate armistice; liberal demands for broadening the basis of the government could be deferred no longer; and, in a matter of weeks, naval mutinies and widespread urban disorders undermined the monarchy altogether. On November 9, a republic was proclaimed and Kaiser Wilhelm departed for Holland; Prince Max von Baden, who had reluctantly assumed the role of Chancellor one month before, now transferred power to the Social Democrat, Friedrich Ebert. The Weimar Republic had come into being: born of the humiliation of defeat, led by indecisive men intimidated by their sudden attainment of power, grudgingly accepted by some Germans, and vilified by many others.

The armistice took Chamberlain, like so many Germans, by surprise. The German armies still occupied foreign soil and hopes of total victory had been heightened by the withdrawal of Russia from the war and the annexationist treaty of Brest-Litovsk in the spring. In his propaganda Chamberlain had

sometimes conjured up the prospect of defeat, but largely for the purpose of exhorting compatriots to greater sacrifice and exertion in the cause of eventual victory. He had never seriously contemplated the collapse of the Hohenzollern empire: it was almost incomprehensible, running contrary to every conviction he held about the superiority of German ideals and the ordained cultural mission of the Germanic race. Now, quite suddenly, everything was in flux: his friend and correspondent throughout the war, Prince Max von Baden, had helped depose Wilhelm, the Bavarian monarchy was overthrown, and in Bayreuth, as in other towns, a Workers and Soldiers Council worked alongside the local administration. "It could well be," he wrote sadly to the painter Paul Croeber, "that the Germans have already accomplished their highest achievements and that Providence is now breaking a vessel which is incapable of producing something higher." [1]

Since 1916 Chamberlain's health had deteriorated rapidly: he was largely confined to bed, his limbs were partially paralyzed, and he was barely capable of speech. Struggling against extreme pain and discomfort, he tried to go on with his literary plans, aided by Eva (and local friends like Paul Pretzsch who later helped publish Chamberlain's correspondence) to whom he dictated his letters and essays in an almost unintelligible stammer. The exact nature of his illness remains uncertain—possibly it was multiple sclerosis, or as Chamberlain once guessed, a rare form of Parkinson's disease. Some of his admirers discerned darker forces at work. Thus, Ludwig Roselius, a prominent Bremen businessman and co-founder of the *Vaterlandspartei*, was sure that the English had got at Chamberlain's tea!—a very un-British action but an occupational anxiety perhaps coming from one of the chiefs of Kaffee HAG.[2] Equally certain of foul play was Arthur Trebitsch, a Viennese Jew and tragic example of *Selbsthass*, who even travelled to Bayreuth to warn Chamberlain—a curious journey reminiscent in some ways of Langbehn's celebrated trip to the Jena asylum to cure Nietzsche.[3]

Though physically worn out, Chamberlain remained mentally alert, keeping up a vast correspondence and continuing to

publish, albeit at a slower rate than before.* His first task was to revise a series of autobiographical reflections, upon which he had been working intermittently since 1916. Organized as a collection of long letters to friends describing his family, education, scientific studies, and early experience of Bayreuth, these recollections carefully excluded personal and marital matters—Anna, for example, was omitted altogether. The book, *Lebenswege meines Denkens* (*Life Journey of My Thinking*), as indeed its title indicated, was a biography of his mind: a justification of his journey toward Bayreuth and *Deutschtum*, and a means of providing readers with a glimpse of the man behind the published works. Partly because he chose not to discuss politics or religion, these reflections contain remarkably little rancor against racial enemies and very little that was explicitly anti-Semitic. He emerges as a cultivated Englishman, steeped in German and European culture, passionately engaged in his writing and led by his fervent idealism to Bayreuth, the "home of his soul." It is a picture of Chamberlain as he saw himself—and, admittedly, as many of his friends saw him—a striking contrast to the hatred and racial anger which filled the letters and political tracts he wrote in those same last years of the war.

Next he returned to an older project, a major study of Christianity, for which he had been collecting notes for several years. The idea, which had originated with Julius Lehmann and the theologian Otto Pfleiderer, had over time changed from a historical survey to a more personal exposition of Chamberlain's beliefs. In 1919 he found it a pleasant escape from the turmoil of Weimar politics to bury himself in the early Christian centuries and to puzzle over biblical criticism

* Chamberlain also found himself in considerable financial difficulty after the war. He had donated his revenues from wartime propaganda to charitable causes, while his investments in Austrian and Hungarian state bonds became worthless paper. His stock and dividends in England were confiscated, then appropriated as part of reparations. Chamberlain made efforts to recover the confiscated wealth, but without success. The liberal press took some delight in his dilemma, accusing him of trying to avoid the consequences of his change of nationality (e.g., *Berliner Tageblatt* Aug. 5, 1921; *Frankfurter Zeitung* Aug. 4, 1921). In the postwar years he was aided financially by his patron, August Ludowici, and by his brothers with whom something of a reconciliation had been made. After Chamberlain's death, his wife's needs were met by a life annuity established by Basil Hall Chamberlain.

and comparative religion. Finished in 1921, *Mensch und Gott*, was a continuation and elaboration of the religious reflections in Chamberlain's earlier writings. Drawing upon Kant, Goethe, Wagner, the German Romantics and Indian religion, he constructed an eclectic, somewhat formless and highly intuitive Christianity. His focus upon Jesus, the intercessor between God and man, and his vision of religion as a manifestation of racial soul place him squarely in the tradition of Germanic Christianity. What is slightly different, say, from the work of Lagarde, is the delight Chamberlain took in Paul's Epistles and his conviction that Paul was the chief preserver of Christ's doctrines, rather than the main corrupter and Semitizing influence. Further, as a prophet of Bayreuth, he placed special emphasis upon the connection of art and religion. The final chapter of the book returned to the familiar themes of aesthetic, religious, and social regeneration. Art, Chamberlain argued, gave shape and form to religious feeling, allowing the Christian truth to be continually re-expressed without degenerating into idolatry or rationalist dogmatism. Quoting his lifetime mentors, Schiller and Wagner, he concluded that man's salvation could be grasped through religious art—the Aryan art of Bayreuth; and the book closes suggesting the significance of Bayreuth and the Wagnerian drama in the task of spiritual rebirth. Not surprisingly, Chamberlain's last religious testament won widespread praise both among supporters of Wahnfried and the numerous adherents of Germanic Christianity.[4]

Apart from these two books, Chamberlain published a very successful collection of essays (mostly completed before the war) and wrote several short political articles for newspapers.[5] His literary output during Weimar, though remarkable under the circumstances, was small and of no special significance; his career as a writer was largely over. Yet, in the 1920s the impact of his ideas both on Bayreuth and the German right was arguably greater than ever before, and hundreds of letters attest to the devoted following he had collected among Germans of all walks of life. To these admirers he was a prophet who had warned of the dangers threatening German culture, and whose prescience had gone

unheeded. Labeled a "renegade" in England and sharply criticized in the liberal press, Chamberlain found himself a hero in nationalist circles: Bayreuth made him a freeman of the city; the anti-republican press celebrated his seventieth birthday in 1925 with columns of praise; he became the most cited authority of a new generation of Wagnerites; and many political and cultural groups solicited his name and interest for their organizations. The image of Chamberlain as court philosopher of Kaiser Wilhelm and cultural prophet of the Wilhelminian bourgeoisie gradually receded before a new *persona*—the "sage of Bayreuth," or the "apostle and founder of the German future" as Alfred Rosenberg once called him.[6] Almost inevitably his story in these years becomes that of an onlooker rather than an active participant; for though he received abundant news of events from visitors and correspondents, his own thoughts too often remain obscure and the written evidence for his responses to situations all too fragmentary.

The experience of Weimar found in Chamberlain's correspondence is that of a lived nightmare. His worst fears had materialized; the foundations of his world had crumbled, and a new Reich had risen on its rubble epitomizing everything that he abhorred. He brooded over the lost chances, moral surrenders, and mistakes of the past, and apportioned blame liberally. Although the army had remained superior in battle, the nation had rotted from within, subverted by its press and politicians, who detested the very structure on which it rested. Bethmann-Hollweg had betrayed the Reich while Kaiser Wilhelm had ignominiously failed it. "In 1890," he wrote, "Bismarck wanted to have strikers committing acts of terror shot; it is reasonable to nip the cancer in the bud and thereby implement the teachings of our gentle Saviour. But, moved by misguided humanitarianism, Kaiser Wilhelm preferred to

separate himself from the greatest statesman of all time rather than punish a few hundred murderous knaves for their crimes." "Today," he added, "the noble lord is harvesting his reward."[7] "How was it," he puzzled, that the German workers "who at the outbreak of war behaved so marvellously and so consciously German, soon after allowed themselves to be captured by their Jewish leaders and seducers?"[8] He deplored the *Halbbildung* and political immaturity of Germans in letters to Prince Eulenburg, a sick and despairing recluse at Liebenberg, and to Admiral Tirpitz, now busy writing his memoirs. As a result of the war, he told Alfred Jacobsen, the Balkan chaos extended to Hamburg and Dresden. No Wilsonian Peace, he predicted, would for long contain the anarchic forces unleashed by the collapse of the Hapsburg, Hohenzollern, and Romanov dynasties.[9]

Contemplating the situation in 1919, Chamberlain found everywhere the conspiratorial design of Jews: as "the vultures of revolution," the beneficiaries of democracy, the agents of socialism, and the principal architects of the reparations agreements. "One can say," he wrote to the biologist Jacob von Uexküll, "without exaggeration that what we are experiencing today is the supremacy of the Jews. When newspapers today speak of eighty to a hundred Jews in the so-called government, this is inaccurate for among the remaining twenty there are many half breeds."[10] His friends expressed similar opinions. The vast scope and pace of political change seemed to exhaust more conventional and familiar categories of explanation, and they yielded to various kinds of secret society myths and tales of Semitic plots. Tirpitz, for example, railed against "the influx of un-German elements from the east" who had "broken the inner strength of the *Volk;*" Dr. Wildgrube, a prominent Conservative, reflected bitterly on "the dictatorship of a handful of Jews;" and Baron Uexküll, whose Baltic estates had been expropriated, voiced his enthusiasm for the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, which were being reprinted in vast numbers by the right. "We stand close to the time," he wrote, "when the power in all states will fall into Jewish hands." He speculated, however, that their own cleverness might yet thwart the Jews, resulting not in their hegemony, but their eradication

[*Ausrottung*].[11] Lastly, another friend, the opera singer H. Bennet Challis, advocated "planned scientific breeding" as the only way to national recovery, while another friend confessed to Chamberlain: "I grow more and more convinced that the whole world can only be relieved of its misery with the elimination [*Ausmerzung*] of Jewry."[12]

Early Weimar offers numerous examples of this sudden escalation in the violence of racial language,[13] and no purpose is served here in examining every detail of these outbursts of frustration and fear from Chamberlain's circle of friends. Yet one series of letters does deserve closer attention, not because they are typical (far from it), but because of the light they throw on the extraordinary career and personality of Artur Dinter, a particularly successful author of racist novels and subsequently a prominent figure in the early history of the Nazi party. The story of Dinter—told here for the first time—reminds us again that merely to reduce racism and anti-Semitism to notions of their social function is to neglect the fact that such prejudice can be a total experience, encapsulating all thought within the same interpretive scheme and enveloping every aspect of a person's existence.

Born in 1876 in Alsace, Dinter was the son of a senior customs official; he studied philosophy and science at the universities of Strasbourg and Munich and then became a teacher, occupying for a time the post of *Oberlehrer* at the German school in Constantinople. But, after a promising start, he threw up this career, returned to Germany and followed his long-cherished ambition to work in the theater. Before the war he wrote a number of plays, directed others in several provincial centers, and helped found the *Verband deutscher Bühnenschriftsteller*. His first contact with Chamberlain's ideas apparently came sometime between 1907 and 1910, during a long nervous crisis brought on by an unhappy love affair; the *Foundations*, Dinter claimed, struck him with the force of a revelation. The book acted like a "giant magnet" giving direction to his efforts, "a natural center point around which all my feeling and thinking, writing and striving, activity and suffering crystallized."[14]

It was in July 1916 that Dinter, then a young infantry captain on the western front, first wrote to Chamberlain. After volunteering in 1914, he had received multiple wounds and was awaiting his medical discharge. If anything the war had hardened his anti-Semitism into an obsession: it was the center of his personal and political life. It had been his goal for some time, he told Chamberlain, to write a fictional extension of Chamberlain's world view which would reach those who were intimidated by a bulky two-volume study like the *Foundations*.[15] Finished in the next year and dedicated to Chamberlain, his immensely popular *Die Sünde wider das Blut* (*The Sin Against the Blood*) came with notes on sources, suggestions for further study, and a short, didactic Afterword on the need for racial and Christian rebirth. Later editions contained lengthy comments on the political upheavals of Weimar. It would merit little notice had it not become *the* best seller in Germany at the end of the war. By 1922 some 200,000 copies had been sold, and some estimates have placed Dinter's readership as high as 1.5 million.[16] Some *Gymnasium* teachers, it was claimed, had read it aloud or recommended it to their students. A sequel, published in 1921, also sold more than 100,000 copies in the first year.[17]

The contents of *Die Sünde* may be briefly summarized. Hermann, the hero, is a young Aryan scientist, born of honest peasant stock. He is married twice, first to the daughter of a wealthy Jewish financier, then to a Gentile, and the story depicts his gradual enlightenment about race and the "diabolical" role of the Jews in modern culture. The plot twists and turns, and there are lengthy debates between the main characters, which enable Dinter to include just about every Jewish stereotype and voice every possible accusation against them. When his second wife gives birth to a child with pronounced Semitic features, Hermann learns that, in her youth, she had been seduced by a Jewish army officer and—in accord with the "laws" of race—that this one "crossing" had been sufficient to drive out good German blood. Further, he learns that this was no chance occurrence but part of a concerted racial policy. Private papers come into Hermann's

hands disclosing the full horror of the Jewish conspiracy and their subjugation of the working masses:

> Hundreds of thousands, even millions of working people with sweat on their faces, in all parts of the globe, jumped (like marionettes) on his [the Jewish financier's] wires. Like a spider he sat in his Berlin office. . . . He was the great pitiless heart which sucked out men's blood to exchange it for ready cash, whether it sprang from the veins of white or black, yellow or red peoples, Christians or heathens. He laughed off the corpses of men and families, even of whole peoples, if he could make money from them.

Gradually, Hermann begins to understand the manipulative role of the Jews in parliamentary politics, their systematic campaign to ruin the industrious *Mittelstand*, their control of advertising, and incitement of the masses against the established order. And so it goes on, as the story moves slowly to its climax (not without discussions of Darwin, Kant, Goethe, the need for a second Reformation, and the issue of Jesus' Jewishness).

Finally, Hermann kills the Jewish officer who had dishonored his wife (in the meantime, she has killed herself and the child). Then, conducting his own defense, he warns listeners at the trial: "If the German Volk does not succeed in shaking off and rendering harmless . . . the Jewish vampire, which it has unsuspectingly nourished with its heartblood, then it will be destroyed in the foreseeable future." Acquitted, Hermann volunteers at the beginning of the war and is shot through the heart on Christmas day 1914: "So now," runs the last sentence, "his wish was fulfilled—to die for the holy Fatherland."[18]

It would be difficult to imagine a more contrived, cheaply sentimental, and distasteful story. It was not explicitly pornographic like the writings of Dinter's friend, Julius Streicher, but seems to have excited a complicated mixture of fear, disgust, prurience, and moral outrage. Insisting that the plot was based on accurate theoretical foundations, Dinter called for immediate legal action amounting to a virtual apartheid system: the restriction of Jewish immigration, exclusion of Jews from the law, teaching, and politics, and the

nullification of their equal civil rights. (In short, the extreme anti-Semitic program drawn up as early as the 1880s.)

The case of Dinter illustrates how racism can invade every aspect of a person's life. Indeed, his long and autobiographical letters to Chamberlain not only reveal in wearisome detail the creation of this novel, but also provide a lurid commentary upon the relationship between his writing and his personal life. "All my books," he once wrote, "go back to personal experiences."[19] Dinter's chief preoccupation seems to have been to find a suitable wife, and his letters (one suspects that they must have tried Chamberlain's patience to the limits) describe one ill-fated liaison after another. Thus, in 1918, his affections were directed toward a young noblewoman from Württemberg whose parents objected to his bourgeois origins and anti-Papal prejudices. A lapsed Catholic, Dinter in turn suspected them of dangerous Jesuitical leanings and decided to search instead for a peasant girl. Within three months he had found a suitable candidate (some 24 years his junior) and marriage was seriously discussed. A further series of difficulties intervened, however: the Württemberg fiancée returned to the scene, a third woman threatened Dinter with a paternity suit, and he finally admitted, he was already married and had been seeking a divorce since 1917! He had abandoned his wife, he confessed, upon discovering that she had been the mistress of a Jew, by whom she had had a child. The overlapping strands of Dinter's fiction and life become very tangled indeed.[20]

Even the passion for his peasant girl, one Gertrud Dreyse, soon turned sour. Racial anxieties plagued Dinter. By July 1919 he was sending pictures of her grandfather, parents, and brothers to Chamberlain for his expert opinion on their racial physiognomy. Hard-pressed, Chamberlain finally decided that Gertrud might stem from "Indian gypsies," but by this time the prospective bride, considering herself of solid Alpine stock and sick of Dinter's persistent researches, had the sense to end the relationship. As for Dinter, he found a bride in 1921—a friend of the Ludendorff family, above reproach, a "sublimely blond and blue-eyed" woman from "a racially pure Thuringian family of teachers and pastors." She was "an excellent *Hausfrau*." "Now," he wrote, "I am finally at rest."[21]

Dinter's fanatical mind regarded the whole world—not without a certain crazy, inner logic—with a fixed and preoccupying expectancy, looking behind everything for hidden motives and special meanings. His private miseries converged with wider collective anxieties in the early postwar era, transforming personal fear into successful racist propaganda and political action. Not only was his novel a stunning success, but Dinter also toured the country on behalf of *völkisch* organizations, treating crowds to harangues against Weimar and the indignities of Versailles. When he spoke in Bayreuth in October 1919, at the end of a tour of thirty towns, the audience overflowed the hall and spilled out into the streets. "We will not rest," he raged, "until northern Schleswig is restored and an undivided part of the Reich. . . . 'til Posen, Danzig, Schleswig-Holstein, Alsace-Lorraine, and the Saar are again German. We will not rest till the last black rogue* has disappeared from the Rhineland and till the whole Rhine is once more free and German." To his "*verehrter Meister*" Chamberlain he confessed that Germany's defeat was not an unmitigated disaster. A victory would merely have sanctified the corrupt old order and condemned the nation to a slow, but inexorable decline. "I do not weep tears," Dinter confessed. "Hitherto I had no idea of the ungodly dilettantism of our leadership." Wilhelm's flight "like a thief" had cleared the path for a new order that would throw off the shackles imposed by domestic and overseas enemies.[22] Dinter's rise within the radical right was meteoric: by 1926 he had become Nazi *Gauleiter* in the critically important state of Thuringia and received the high honorary party number of 5. His career is one further indication of the continuing intellectual influence of

* This refers to the Moroccan and Senegalese troops used by the French in occupying the Rhineland 1919–1920. For the public outcry that this provoked see: Keith L. Nelson, "The Black Horror on the Rhine" *Journal of Modern History* (1970) 42:606–27. In *Mein Kampf* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1943), p. 325, Hitler commented: "Just as [the Jew] systematically ruins women and girls, he does not shrink back from pulling down the blood barriers for others, even on a large scale. It was and it is Jews who bring the Negroes into the Rhineland, always with the same secret thought and clear aim of ruining the hated white race . . . and himself rising to be its master."

Chamberlain on this younger generation of anti-Semitic activists.*

Dinter could never be described as typical, not even of the extreme right. But the hardships of a protracted war, followed by national humiliation and the convulsion of revolution produced a dramatic upsurge in anti-Semitism and widened the appeal of anti-Semitic politics. The efforts of Pan-German and *völkisch* circles in the previous decades to harness the different layers of German antipathy toward Jews for a more focused political campaign achieved sudden success. In several areas officials and spokesmen for Jewish organizations reported with mounting anxiety that a "pogrom mentality" was sweeping the land; rabbis in some localities issued warn-

* Dinter's fall from favor with Hitler was equally rapid. As a Chamberlain disciple, Dinter spent much of his time advocating the need for a religious reformation and an all-out campaign against Rome as well as the Jews. As early as 1924 Hitler began to crack down on multiple allegiances among Nazi party members and he particularly wished to avoid religious disputes that might divide Protestant and Catholic adherents of the party. There were complaints against Dinter's leadership in Thuringia and, after some hesitation, Hitler began to look for a new leader—in 1927 he chose Fritz Sauckel (the labor boss of the Third Reich). But Dinter was not pushed aside so easily. He had earlier published a series of criticisms in *Der Nationalsozialist* (of which he was the editor); and now he sought to air the matter before the next general meeting of the party. He even demanded that a party Senate be elected to advise Hitler, hoping in this way to check the excessive concentration of power in the *Führer's* hands. When these efforts failed, Dinter continued a campaign against the party in his journal *Geisteschristentum* ("only the blind, uncritical admirer of Hitler or those people . . . who do not want to admit the truth, can still doubt that the Hitler party is a Jew party, which under the *völkisch* banner carries on the business of Rome"). He was expelled from the party in 1928, but later made his peace with Nazism and worked actively for the Nazi Christian movement. After 1945 he was summoned before the courts in Baden to answer charges that he was continuing to agitate for a racist *Volkskirche*. Dinter died in 1948 at the age of 72. A. Dinter, "Der Kampf um die Vollendung der Reformation: Mein Ausschluss aus der Nationalsozialistischen Deutschen Arbeiterpartei," *Geisteschristentum* (Sept–Oct., 1928), 1; *Der Nationalsozialist* (Weimar) September 12, 1925; Dietrich Bronder, *Bevor Hitler kam* (Hannover, 1964), p. 262; also, Albrecht Tyrell, *Führer befiehl . . . Selbsterzeugnisse aus der Kampfzeit der NSDAP: Dokumentation und Analyse* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1969).

ings to their congregations not to linger around synagogues before and after services; there were a few cases of physical violence and (in Bamberg, for example) of Jewish homes being daubed with swastikas. Compared to eastern Europe actual violence was minimal, but brutal rhetoric became almost commonplace. "A sleepy meeting," the Conservative leader, Count Westarp, remembered, "would wake up and the house applaud as soon as I started on the subject of the Jews."[23] Golo Mann has argued that these immediate postwar years evinced a more widespread and ferocious popular anti-Semitism than any period of recent German history, including the Depression and the Third Reich. As the recent research of Werner Jochmann has demonstrated, there is considerable evidence to support the claim. With appalling readiness an embittered, alienated and fearful population resorted to the same scapegoat. From the pulpits of the clergy, in police barracks and army messes, at student gatherings and in workshops, a polyphony of voices intoned variations upon the same anti-Semitic theme.[24]

The line of continuity between pre-war and Weimar anti-Semitism is clear. One would have to look hard in the anti-Semitic literature of the 1920s, as Peter Pulzer has observed, to find a novel argument or point which had not already been used before 1914.[25] Nonetheless, there were some changes of emphasis or accentuations of ideological trends present in the Wilhelminian period, in addition to the general increase in threatening language and the more vicious tone of the attacks. First, there was a far wider acceptance of racial theories of anti-Semitism than in previous decades. Building on the writings of Chamberlain, Duehring, Gobineau, and Schemann, as well as the research of ethnologists and anthropologists, a new generation of race publicists largely tailored the already well-established Aryan myth to the circumstances of post-1918 Europe. Among the most successful were Hans F. K. Günther and the Nordic School, whose ideology was strongly anti-Semitic and whose writings achieved much acclaim in *völkisch* and right wing circles.[26] The increasing popularity of such intellectualized and racialist anti-Semitism since the 1880s implied a larger shift of opinion away from older religious and economic forms of prejudice to a belief that the Jew was

unassimilable and did not belong to the German *Volk*. The logic of unalterable biological facts precluded the hope of a German-Jewish fusion through conversion to Christianity.

Strangely enough, alongside the vogue of racial theorizing, with its pretentious apparatus of scientific terms, there was also an increase in the use of images and language drawn from medieval demonology and reminiscent of such religious fanatics as August Röhling in Austria in the 1880s. In a skillful piece of literary detective work, Norman Cohn has analyzed the origin and dissemination of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* in terms of a revival, in secularized form, of Christian apocalyptic beliefs. Fastened to this image of the Jew as Satan's accomplice were also a variety of secret society or masonic myths, which had been steadily cultivated since the eighteenth century.[27] Before 1918 such notions had limited currency in Germany, but in the aftermath of the November revolution they became the subject of numerous pamphlets and speeches. A tract by Artur Dinter on the Talmud, for example, sold over 60,000 copies in one year, while the Lehmann press had considerable success with a study of freemasonry, world war, and world revolution by Dr. Friedrich Wichtl, which focused on a Jewish plot centered in England. Henry Ford's *The International Jew* was also a huge publishing success and was eagerly devoured by Chamberlain in the last months of 1923.[28] Lastly, in addition to these features, the language of postwar anti-Semitism contained many more expressions derived from parasitology, identifying the Jew as a poison, a pestilence, a deadly bacillus, parasite, or beast of prey: all of these suggesting his complete separation from the rest of society and implying that his removal or elimination was vital to the health of the nation.

Jewish stereotypes remained much the same in Weimar as before, although the depiction of Jews as socialist insurrectionaries—now Bolshevik conspirators—understandably gained special prominence in the wake of the revolutionary outbreaks across Europe between 1917 and 1920. Similarly, the alleged international ramifications of Jewry excited more attention in the light of the Comintern and the international financial controls imposed upon the Reich.

There was also considerable continuity in the sociology of anti-Semitism before and after the war. Its main political strength was concentrated in the diverse groups of the *Mittelstand*. Teachers, tradesmen, small businessmen, officials, salaried employees, parsons, lawyers, artisans, and peasants were all well represented in the multiplicity of anti-Jewish organizations that sprang up in early Weimar. The economic grievances against big business and big labor, the anxieties over status, the ideological identification of themselves with the true values of German culture, which had prompted many in these strata to embrace nationalist and anti-Semitic politics before 1918, were much intensified by political and economic trends in the new republic.[29] In contrast, the organized industrial working class proved largely impervious to racist propaganda, although scholars are somewhat divided as to the incidence of anti-Semitism among workers outside the SPD and its auxiliary associations.[30] Higher up the social scale, among aristocrats, industrialists, academics, and the *Bildungsbürgertum*, anti-Semitism had made considerable and continual progress since the 1890s; but particularly after 1914, the inhibitions of these social groups about engaging in demagogic anti-Jewish movements were whittled away by the pressures of war and revolution. The campaign for annexationist war aims and the *Vaterlandspartei*, launched by the Pan-German League, had played a significant part in this process.

Among the young, both those who shared the *Fronterlebnis* and those who spent the war in high school or entered university shortly afterward, antipathy toward Jews was also conspicuous. Ex-officers and demobilized soldiers, confronted with the problems of reintegrating into civilian society, were easily recruited into many *völkisch* associations and militant nationalist *Bünde*. University students, hard-pressed by inflation and worsening prospects for employment, were also highly receptive to anti-Semitic appeals, and demonstrations against Jewish professors (unheard of before 1914) and the adoption of exclusionary "Aryan paragraphs" by student *Burschenschaften* were not uncommon. In the Berlin student elections of 1921, almost two-thirds of the total vote was cast for anti-

Semitic candidates. The same radicalizing trends were also present in the Youth Movement (even before the war 92 percent of the *Wandervogel* had no Jewish members and Jewish participation had been a hotly debated issue), where a number of new right wing militant *Bünde* emerged. Racialist, nationalist, anti-communist, and more conscious of politics than their predecessors, these groups called for a "German Revolution" that would destroy the Weimar system and establish a new society on *völkisch* principles.[31] "The German," Hans Blüher, the first historian of the Youth Movement, predicted in 1922, "will soon know that the core of all political issues is the Jewish question."[32]

Finally, the general intensification of anti-Semitism was also registered in the attitudes of the Protestant clergy. Politically conservative, patriotic, ardently monarchist and anti-republican, the pastorate became rapidly embroiled in bitter disputes with the political left over education, the corporate status, property, and privileges of the churches. The Stoecker tradition remained strong among the clergy, while the search for a new politically relevant theology, attuned to the circumstances of the postwar era, brought many churchmen closer to the *völkisch* nationalist standpoint.[33] Anti-Jewish pronouncements by prominent pastors and theologians were commonplace, as Richard Gutteridge has recently shown. For example, Paul Althaus, who became professor of theology at Erlangen in 1925, demanded that the significance of the Jewish question be fully recognized: "Evangelization" he insisted "is today opposed on all sides by a mentality under Jewish influence in business, the press, art, and literature." He especially upbraided Weimar's left intelligentsia and inveighed against "the demoralized and demoralizing urban intellectual class which is represented primarily by the Jewish race."[34] Similar blanket association of liberal, socialist, and atheistic ideas with Jewry filled the pages of the evangelical periodicals which were widely read and influential in middle-class homes. Week after week, as Ino Arndt has shown, they repeated the standard stereotypes and included reviews of current anti-Semitic publications.[35] Moreover, in the wake of the German defeat, a number of racist Christian sects were founded. As early as

1917, on the occasion of the Luther anniversary celebrations, a small group of racist Christians led by Pastor Friedrich Andersen, Professor Adolf Bartels, and Hans von Wolzogen issued a manifesto demanding that all Semitic doctrines be expunged from Protestantism and stressing Luther's anti-Semitic statements and his abhorrence of democracy. Four years later, together with Chamberlain, Karl Grunsky, Arthur Bonus, and other prominent Wagnerites and anti-Semites, they established a *Bund für eine deutsche Kirche* which achieved considerable publicity in the Reich. Similar groups arose elsewhere: for example, the Leipzig *Deutsche Christenbund*, the Prussian *Christlich Deutsche Bewegung*, and the *Thüringer Deutsche Christen* (in which Dinter was a leading figure), the last of which soon openly identified the goal of a Christian renaissance with the aims of the embryonic Nazi movement and cooperated eagerly with local *Ortsgruppen* of the party.* Although these right wing fringe groups aroused some concern and embarrassment among national leaders of the church, almost nothing was done to check the general radicalizing of the clergy and the laity, and no forthright de-

* As we have seen, Chamberlain played a major role in formulating and popularizing the doctrines of Aryan or Germanic Christianity. To many Germans he had successfully incorporated Christ into a Germanic world view, providing a convenient ideological bridge between their growing racial and nationalist sentiments and their basic Christian beliefs. Chamberlain and the Wahnfried circle remained important ideological influences. Friedrich Anderson, for example, admitted that his break with Lutheran orthodoxy was decisively influenced by reading Chamberlain; similarly, Dinter and Max Maurenbrecher did much to publicize his ideas among the Thuringian German Christians. After these extremist sects were unified in 1932 into a pro-Nazi coalition (the *Glaubensbewegung Deutsche Christen*) Chamberlain's works were frequently quoted as examples of a successful synthesis of religion, politics, and race. Also, after 1935 when Christianity came under attack from various sections of the Nazi party, a number of pamphlets used Chamberlain to argue that a Christian rebirth had to be an element of a successful Nazi revolution. But Chamberlain was also invoked for quite different purposes. Thus, *Junge Kirche* (the mouthpiece of the *Bekennende Kirche*, which voiced its opposition to Nazi policies) rejected angrily in 1936 the appropriation of Chamberlain's name for assaults on the church. It insisted that he was "outstanding among the confessors of Jesus Christ at the turn of the century." As late as 1940, Pastor Georg Schott founded a *H. S. Chamberlain Vereinigung* in Dresden with a religious program, but it attracted little support and was dissolved within two years. (*Junge Kirche*, quoted in R. Gutteridge, *The German Evangelical Church and the Jews 1889–1950*, New York, 1976, p. 35). For anti-Jewish sentiments among Catholics and their reformulation in racist terms, see: Hermann Greive, *Theologie und Ideologie: Katholizismus und Judentum in Deutschland und Österreich 1918–1935* (Heidelberg, 1969).

nunciation of anti-Semitic agitation was officially sanctioned during Weimar.[36]

In the Wilhelminian period, despite the openly anti-Jewish stance of a range of small parties, occupational groups and nationalist *Verbände*, political anti-Semitism remained deeply fragmented. This disunity continued in early Weimar, although immediately after the November revolution strenuous efforts were made by the Pan-Germans, Agrarians, and racists to make their influence felt in a broad "national opposition" to the republic. The result was the *Deutschnationale Volkspartei* (DNVP), an amalgam of Conservatives, Christian Socialists, and anti-Semites which was in many ways the successor to the *Vaterlandspartei* coalition. Its basic program, proclaimed in April 1920, explicitly condemned "the predominance of Jewry in government and public life," and its electoral speeches, slogans and placards attempted to harness the anti-Semitic mood so widespread in the Reich. "What has Berlin become?" asked one handbill circulated in 1920. "A playground for Jews!" In 1924 another election poster proclaimed a "Struggle against Jewish influence on all fronts," while much of the party's everyday propaganda employed crude racial stereotypes and caricatures of "Jewish types" to condemn the republican leadership.[37] Admittedly *völkisch* elements never managed to secure complete control of the party, but their pressure on the leadership for a more forceful expression of racism won considerable success especially in the years before 1922. As the largest party of the right, the DNVP played a crucial role in transmitting *völkisch* ideology to the mass of German electors and in endowing anti-Semitic accusations with a patina of respectability. As George Mosse has observed: "While respectable DNVP personalities in top hats and frock coats moved in the best social circles, their aides were on the street corners disseminating racist propaganda."[38] But this effort to incorporate all the anti-Weimar forces into a single political coalition, fusing traditional conservative and more radical populist elements, ran into difficulties once the various factions switched from a common defense against the threat of left-wing revolution to more specific aims and issues. Early hopes that the party might absorb Stresemann's *Deutsche*

Volkspartei proved false, the extreme racist wing finally seceded after considerable friction in 1922, and, most important, the DNVP largely failed to build a lasting base of support among the *Mittelstand*. After a brief alignment with the party many of the Protestant middle strata turned to a range of small regional religious or special interest groups.[39] Not until the Nazi electoral victories of 1930 were these fragmented elements of the *Mittelstand* integrated into a broad populist movement of the right.

Apart from the DNVP and older pressure groups such as the Pan-Germans, the right waged its war on the republic through a staggering number of veterans organizations, cultural associations, occupational groups, rifle and gymnastic clubs, religious sects, and paramilitary formations. At one end of the spectrum was the *Deutschnationale Handlungsgehilfen-Verband* (DHV) or commercial employees union founded in 1893 with a large membership and considerable funds for all manner of political and publishing ventures, whose leaders were prominent in many radical right organizations. At the other pole were numerous small occultist sects and "blood and soil" breeding communities for upgrading the Nordic race. Although there were many differences in ideology, rhetoric, and goals between them, these groups together formed a vast and complex network with overlapping memberships, personal ties between their leaders, and certain basic similarities in outlook—among the most important of which was anti-Semitism.[40]

One organization, founded in February 1919 by the Pan-Germans and other anti-Semitic groups, deserves additional comment both because of its swift and extraordinary success in capturing a mass following and because it acted as a way station for many right-wing personalities (including several disciples of Chamberlain) on their journey toward Nazism. This was the *Deutschvölkischer Schutz-und Trutzbund* (DVSTB), perhaps the first organization to achieve a mass mobilization of the *völkisch* movement by combining anti-Semitic ideology largely fashioned before 1918 with mass political techniques and methods of organization that anticipated the Nazis. Led by Alfred Roth (who was also Secretary of the

DHV) the *Bund* launched a remarkable recruitment drive designed to publicize, in the words of its charter, "the pernicious and destructive influence of Jewry" and to make anti-Semitism the pivotal issue of Weimar politics. Membership rose rapidly, numbering 25,000 in 1919, 100,000 a year later, and shortly before its dissolution by the Weimar authorities in 1922, it had over 280,000 members (veterans, artisans, teachers, students and apprentices were heavily represented). It held hundreds of demonstrations, arranged lecture tours by Dinter and Bartels, and unleashed propaganda blitzes of unprecedented magnitude. (In just one year, 1920, it distributed 7.6 million pamphlets, 4.7 million handbills and 7.8 million stickers). Organized into some 600 local branches, the *Bund* engaged in wide-ranging activities, including efforts to infiltrate schools, universities, and cultural institutions, campaigns to influence church elections to achieve the appointment of anti-Semitic church officials and clerics, and the holding of patriotic German Day celebrations around the country. It also had a clandestine arm, set up by Alfred Jacobsen (Chamberlain's lawyer in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* trial) and maintained contacts with various *Freikorps* and with Organisation Consul, an assassination group responsible for the murders of Erzberger and Rathenau. Chamberlain's friends and correspondents were prominent in the *Bund* and sent him news of their activities; among his acquaintances on its advisory board were, for example, Lehmann, Dinter, Bartels and Fritsch, while Carl Cesar Eiffe was among those who contributed money.[41]

This, then, was the confusing political environment of Chamberlain's last years. After the initial shock of the November revolution and a stunned reaction to the establishment of a democratic state, his spirits began to improve somewhat. The wave of left wing reforms that swept spontaneously over the

Reich in the first year of peace soon ebbed as traditional political patterns and power structures began to reassert themselves. Weimar politics and culture were anathema to Chamberlain—the triumph of everything he had opposed—but the continuing economic dislocations and deep political discord that prevented the consolidation of the republic in its first four years gave him grounds for hope that the system could be overthrown. Out of the ashes of the *Kaiserreich*, he predicted, would arise the phoenix of a new Germany, hardened by its trials and ready once more to assume a dominant position in the world. He compared the anti-republican cause to that of the early Christians whose "times were without ideals," and who through their unbroken faith and moral power had eventually transformed a hostile world. "It is magnificent, indeed overwhelming," he wrote to Prince Eulenburg, "to realize the power of a pure idea, to see it grow from small beginnings and not only survive the collapse of a giant empire, but go on to conquer the conquerors. . . . One comes to the conviction that far greater things might be in the offing than those now in power could possibly suspect."[42]

From newspapers, conversations with visitors to Bayreuth, and through a large correspondence, Chamberlain pieced together his own assessment of conditions in the Reich; a prisoner in his house at Bayreuth, he lived in an encapsulated *völkisch* world without any point of contact with the liberal and progressive spirit of Weimar. Like so many others, Chamberlain longed for a right wing coup that would take advantage of the growing crisis in the nation to topple the "*Judenrepublik*". Though on principle opposed to any involvement in the morass of party politics, he nonetheless valued the DNVP as a temporary counterweight to the left, but was soon troubled by its internal divisions and by reports of "sad experiences behind the scenes" from friends active in the party (i.e. the efforts of moderate and traditional Conservatives to resist a *völkisch* takeover).[43] Pondering the alternatives, Chamberlain pinned his hopes chiefly on the army and the *Freikorps:* perhaps, he speculated, new leadership would emerge from the officer corps or among the troops fighting the Poles on the eastern borders, or from the ranks of the Youth

Movement.[44] In these early postwar years he embarked on a political journey, a vicarious one for the most part, largely conducted through letters; he followed his friends and informants through the maze of nationalist organizations, and like many of them eventually arrived at the Nazi party.

The first major attempt to destroy the republic came in March 1920 with the Kapp-Ehrhardt *putsch*, which was defeated in five days by the concerted action of German workers in calling a general strike and also by the refusal of the *Reichswehr* leadership to give it their support. Hitherto, Chamberlain had been an admirer of Wolfgang Kapp, one of the most active wartime opponents of Bethmann-Hollweg and a founder of the *Vaterlandspartei*, but in the wave of criticism and recrimination that followed the dismal collapse of the coup his opinions changed radically (unlike Ludwig Schemann, who later wrote a passionate defense of Kapp).[45] One of Chamberlain's young disciples, Josef Stolzing-Cerny, a minor anti-Semitic poet and journalist of Czech origin, had been a press organizer during the *putsch*. Reporting angrily on his experiences, he declared: "Unfortunately [Kapp] was not at all 'the man with the lion heart,' much rather the man with the beer heart, for he continually used all his energies befuddling his brain with alcohol. . . . In the same situation a Bismarck or a Napoleon would have hunted the whole Jewish-socialist republic to the devil." Stolzing-Cerny (the name Stolzing came from *Die Meistersinger*) was furious at Kapp's refusal to turn the Ehrhardt brigade loose for a full-scale attack on Berlin Jewry.[46]

Meantime, Artur Dinter had spent the brief period of the Kapp regime in the Ruhr, the heart of the strike movement, where he watched the Red Army mobilize and drive out the *Reichswehr* forces and police units stationed in the area. His impressions illustrate the kind of information on which Chamberlain based his opinions and also point to a broader shift of views in *völkisch* circles in the wake of the Kapp débâcle.

> The miserable Kapp attempt, which one must call childish if not criminal, caught me in the middle of my lecture tour through the Ruhr region. I witnessed terrible fighting, fought my way through various adventures on a freight train to

> Neudietendorf, then walked for seven hours to my house in the woods, only to find the same conditions there. Here too were dead and wounded. A proclamation was posted that every man of 18–45 years capable of bearing arms was at once to enlist in the Red Army, and that all weapons were to be handed over at once. I, of course, did neither one nor the other. I hid part of my collection of firearms and kept my Browning pistol in my pocket, determined to sell my life as dearly as possible if things took a turn for the worse. But nothing happened. Although a sentry was placed in front of the house, nobody came in. I am increasingly convinced that we are heading for long years of civil war. We are unquestionably entering a new era of Bolshevism—a wholly natural reaction to the one-sided materialism of the last fifty years directed solely at enjoyment, profit and greed. Bolshevism undoubtedly has a healthy core even if the path which the blind, uncritical masses take is indistinguishable from chaos. The propertied and the leaders of society are themselves to blame because they regard acquisition and possession as goals in themselves viewing them as the only things which give life meaning. In consequence they fail to appreciate the spiritual and psychic nature of human beings and their eternal destiny. Now comes the inevitable backlash. I have spoken a great deal with these fanatical workers and I was deeply moved by the powerful impression of their well-disciplined workers' battalions. Each fellow in them was a born and trained soldier, willingly subordinating himself to a freely chosen leader. And then the enormous impression made by the General Strike! The terrible power it reveals of bringing all the wheels to a standstill by a command! No army and no authority is effective against it! The world and the organization of the state must be placed on wholly new foundations! The next decades will see the death of one order and the evolution of another—may God grant us a leader who properly understands the signs of the times. Men like Kapp and the right wing of our party are living corpses from whose bodily organs the rhythm of life has been extinguished.[47]

Here, as in other letters to Chamberlain at the time, Dinter concluded that nothing further could be expected from moribund conservatives like Kapp. A new dynamic and populist politics of the right was required, adapted to the crisis conditions of postwar Germany and capable of crystallizing the

energies of the "front generation" into a powerful movement. "We want," Dinter wrote, "to pull together the whole German people into a great sacred work community, which knows one goal, that of service, the *Volk* and the fatherland."[48]

Though the details of Chamberlain's thoughts remain a mystery, his friends were becoming increasingly disenchanted with the elitist style and bourgeois composition of groups such as the Pan-Germans and the DNVP; they dismissed these organizations as anachronistic and incapable of building the mass following which (as the Kapp failure illustrated) was necessary to challenge the power of the left. Their answer was "German socialism," an amorphous term signifying a radical nationalist alternative to liberal individualism and Marxism. It conjured up nebulous images of corporatism, class solidarity and social cooperation, a spiritual revolution against materialism, and the subservience of the individual to the needs of an authoritarian state. There were many variants: Spengler closely associated this "authentic" socialism with the traditional Prussian virtues of duty and self-sacrifice; Moeller van den Bruck described it in terms of the spiritual unity of the *Volk* and claimed that class enmity and party divisions would miraculously evaporate with the reassertion of German values. For Chamberlain, German or "ethical" socialism was equally vague—an amalgam of idealism, corporatism, technocratic planning, and Wagnerian nostalgia for an idyllic past.[49] Like later fascist ideologues he saw no contradiction between such socialism and the defense of property rights; his ideal of class reconciliation was synonymous with racial and national solidarity, and any gaps or problems in his logic were overcome by heavy doses of unifying rhetoric.

There were many rival political groups in the early years of Weimar that proclaimed themselves the true bearers of German socialism, promising a dynamic blend of racial nationalism and populist politics. But it was the National Socialist movement that especially began to attract members of Chamberlain's circle by its success in drawing large numbers of recruits from the petty bourgeoisie and the working classes. By the summer of 1923, chiefly through Hitler's talents as a party organizer and tactician and through his spellbinding ora-

tory, the Nazis had been transformed from one of many small discussion groups of mostly skilled workers and veterans meeting in the smoke-filled beer halls of Munich into a party of some 50,000 members (and about 150,000 sympathizers in Bavaria alone). Those disgruntled at the inaction and unimaginative *Kampfstil* of more traditional *völkisch* groups found in Nazism a more radical and determined alternative; its barrage of rallies and processions, its ruthlessness toward opponents, military discipline, and careful attention to the symbolism of politics proved irresistible to many of the most activist elements of the nationalists. "The new movement," Hitler announced, "aims to provide what the others have not: a nationalist movement with a firm social base, a hold over the broad masses, welded together in an iron-hard organization, filled with blind obedience and inspired by a brutal will, a party of struggle and action."[50] By the beginning of 1923 Hitler occupied a leading position in the Bavarian radical right and, encouraged by the example of Mussolini's successful "march on Rome," was seeking for a chance to consolidate his position in the south and take action against the republic.

Conditions in Munich were especially favorable for the growth of the extreme right. Bavaria had suffered heavily from the war and the revolution had been bloodier there than elsewhere, culminating in a short-lived Soviet Republic that was brutally suppressed by *Freikorps* forces. Dread of communism among the propertied classes, together with deep conservative and particularist suspicions of Berlin, made the city a base for the enemies of Weimar. In addition, whereas the Kapp *putsch* had failed in Berlin, a simultaneous coup in the south under Gustav von Kahr had succeeded, turning the state even more into a right wing stronghold, a "cell of order" which attracted like a magnet all the anti-republican elements dislodged from other parts of the Reich (especially when the republican authorities began to take firmer action after the Rathenau murder in 1922). The idea began to spread among the proliferating nationalist and racist groups that Bavaria might act as a staging ground for a triumphant "march on Berlin."

By early 1923 the circle of Chamberlain's friends and disciples intersected with that of Hitler at numerous points. As

an up-and-coming young politician with an ability to lure workers into the nationalist camp, Hitler was soon cultivated by a number of wealthy Munich families, among them the Bechsteins and Chamberlain's publisher, Bruckmann. As early as 1920, Elsa Bruckmann, who had been devastated by the death of her nephew (the poet Norbert von Hellingrath) at Verdun, invited Hitler to her salon. She soon became one of his ardent admirers and, according to Karl Alexander von Müller, discovered in her activities for the party a new reason for living and hope for the future.[51] J. F. Lehmann, who had continued to play an active role in racist politics after the war and was briefly jailed for planning a coup against the revolutionary Eisner regime, also made early contact with the Nazis. Indeed, he may well have acted as an intermediary for right wing funds, since his financial support for Hitler in the summer of 1920 coincided with the first efforts of the Pan-Germans to draw the Nazi party into their orbit. As the publisher of *Deutschlands Erneuerung* and much other bestselling racist literature, he also became acquainted with Dietrich Eckart and several other Nazi writers, and it was Lehmann who first gave the young Baltic Russian, Alfred Rosenberg, a job when he came to Munich in 1919.[52] Dr. Erich Kühn, the chief editor of *Deutschlands Erneuerung* (and a correspondent of Chamberlain) was also involved with Nazism from its earliest days under Anton Drexler.[53]

Furthermore, in the wake of the Kapp fiasco, Stolzing-Cerny appeared in Munich and after a brief spell working for Lehmann became an editor for the Nazi *Völkischer Beobachter*; a letter from him to Chamberlain in January 1921 sang the praises of "Adolf Hitler, an Austrian worker, a man of extraordinary oratorical talents and an astonishingly rich political knowledge who knows marvellously how to thrill the masses."[54] Lastly, there was Dinter, whose path toward Nazism is more obscure: his first contacts seem to date from 1922 and he was probably influenced by his friend Julius Streicher, who in that year allied his followers in Nuremberg with Hitler.[55]

As early as 1915 Chamberlain had called for an "iron broom" to sweep Germany clean (an expression the Nazis quoted repeatedly); even so, it is doubtful that he envisioned a

sweeper as radical as Hitler.[56] But the subsequent failures of traditional conservatism and the chaos of early Weimar convinced him of the need for a completely new style of politics, while several members of the Wahnfried household were quick to voice their enthusiasm for D'Annunzio and Mussolini in Italy.[57] Along with many adherents of the *völkisch* right, Chamberlain put his faith in a broad coalition marching behind a national hero—Ludendorff being the most likely choice. The role assigned to Hitler in this scheme was that of a "drummer" who could mobilize broad public support against the republic. It was probably the widely reported pitched battle that Hitler and his followers fought against the communists in the neighboring town of Coburg that confirmed Chamberlain's ideas about the potential political value of Nazism, while the French incursion into the Ruhr, and the political and economic crisis it created, convinced him that the time was ripe for action. He still nourished some apprehension about the Nazi leader, however, and it was not until they met in October 1923 that all his doubts were assuaged. Then it was Hitler's personal charisma and deference to the cause of Wagnerism that completely won the old man over. Since the war Bayreuth had become more and more identified with *völkisch* politics; now in Hitler Wahnfried found a man dedicated to the destruction of the republic who openly connected his own mission to that of Wagnerism. During his last years the two central preoccupations of Chamberlain's existence—the future of Germany and of Bayreuth—became centered upon the fortunes of the Nazi *Führer*.

After marrying Eva and settling in Bayreuth, Chamberlain had assumed a range of family responsibilities. The prestige and cultural influence of the festival was at its peak when Cosima handed over the reins of power to her son in 1907. All Wagner's dramas had been performed on the festival stage; the family income was sufficient to meet its immediate needs; and

the Wahnfried interpretation of the Master's ideas and artistic intent had triumphantly driven all others from the field. Yet, just beneath the surface, treacherous rocks and shoals threatened this outwardly buoyant vessel. The New York *Parsifal* performance of 1903, staged despite Cosima's bitter opposition, was a reminder of the tenuous hold Wahnfried had over the dramas—especially since all copyright controls were due to expire in 1913. Then, the inheritance struggle between Isolde and Cosima, culminating in a savage court battle, raised the ominous prospect of a division of the Wagner legacy should the matriarch—76 on the eve of the war—die or her son Siegfried remain unmarried or childless. And, since Siegfried was totally preoccupied with running the festival and lacked experience in what might be called the "politics of art," it was upon Chamberlain's shoulders that the larger problems of family business devolved.[58]

Thus, before the war, he and Eva—who remained Cosima's secretary—took charge of such matters as the publication of Wagner's autobiography, the seemingly endless task of building the Wagner archive, and the recruitment of new writers for the *Bayreuther Blätter*. Over Hans von Wolzogen Chamberlain exerted an especially strong influence and the *Blätter* became noticeably more *völkisch* and more in tune with the *Foundations* and his other major works. With the loss of Wahnfried's copyright controls imminent, the "inner circle" of Wagnerites was particularly anxious to demonstrate the importance of the *Festspiele* in the cultural and racial mission of the Reich: essays by such devotees as Friedrich Gross, Arthur Seidl, and Leopold von Schroeder were more devoutly phrased than ever, describing Bayreuth as an Aryan temple, a sacred place of pilgrimage for the race.[59] More practical were efforts, again choreographed by Chamberlain, Wolzogen, and Friedrich von Schoen, to obtain a special dispensation from the *Reichstag* for *Parsifal*; yet in 1912, just as in 1901, the request met with a refusal, despite a petition with over 18,000 signatures. Controversial since its inception the "Bayreuth Idea" had many enemies.

The other major issue which destroyed the peace of Wahnfried in these years was Isolde's claim for a share of the family

inheritance. It was Chamberlain and Eva who were most incensed at the demand and led the opposition. Their vehemence in part reflected Eva's jealous pride in being Wagner's only recognized daughter; but it was also inspired by a bitter hatred for Franz Beidler—Isolde's husband—and a fear that their control over the festival would be seriously weakened if Isolde were successful, for she alone had produced a son. Indeed, while the courts were deciding the issue, Siegfried and the Chamberlains proposed a complete revision in the financial and administrative structure of the festival by establishing a *Richard Wagner Stiftung für das deutsche Volk*—a foundation that would control all the family possessions, including the festival house, its funds, Wahnfried, and the Wagner archives. While Michael Karbaum has suggested that this was a device for further increasing the Chamberlains' power, their motives appear to me to be less selfish. Not only did a foundation guarantee the transference of the Wagner inheritance and control of the festivals in the future, rather than leaving this to the vagaries of inheritance by birth (especially since Siegfried at 45 was still a bachelor) but it also nullified the arguments of those who opposed special state protection for Bayreuth on the ground that it would merely enrich the Wagner family. But the closing of the festival during the war, Cosima's victory over Isolde in 1915, and Siegfried's marriage led to a postponement and then a permanent shelving of the plan.[60]

The war years brought many changes in Bayreuth. The festival theater was closed; large numbers of ticket returns in the summer of 1914 due to the worsening international situation, burdened it with heavy losses; and inflation, which reached disastrous proportions after 1918, seriously reduced the festival funds carefully gathered in the last decade of peace. The *Blätter* continued its strongly racist and political emphasis with essays affirming the righteousness of Germany's struggle and demands from Wolzogen and Professor Paul Förster of Berlin that special attention be paid to the molding of a new postwar generation. Since there were no festival gatherings it was left to the *Blätter* to continue the links between Wagnerites in Central Europe and to argue the

spiritual and intellectual relevance of "the Bayreuth Idea" for the victory and redemption of the Reich. But the audience for the journal was very small, and Bayreuth would have been almost forgotten in those years but for the staggering success of Chamberlain as a propagandist. He alone had a wide national and international reputation; he alone was constantly in the news. And as the chief link between Wagnerism and the political strivings of the right during the war, he not only helped weld Bayreuth and the *völkisch* movement more closely together, but also became the undisputed prophet of the Wahnfried circle, the figure around whom the new generation of Wagnerites congregated. In this respect the war acted as a catalyst continuing and strengthening the politicization of the Wagner cult—a trend which reached a culmination in its postwar identification with the Hitler movement.

Haus Wahnfried itself was much altered. Rising costs for fuel forced the family to close off most of its drafty rooms while outside the lawns were dug up and potatoes and cabbages replaced beds of flowers. The daily life and atmosphere of the mansion were also changed by the arrival in rapid succession of a new brood of Wagners—thus relieving the worries of all the older generation. For in 1914 one of the principal anxieties of Cosima and the Chamberlains was that Siegfried appeared much too content as a bachelor. Eva gave him explicit instructions as he prepared for a visit to Berlin: "*All* who love and admire you look anxiously into the future and cherish with us the deep wish that you will find the right woman. . . . so find your little kitten [*Katerlieschen*] and bring young life into our dear Wahnfried! . . . It is time!"[61] Ever obliging and dutiful, Siegfried began searching in earnest and in September 1915 married Winifred Williams, the adopted daughter of the pianist Karl Klindworth, a pupil of Liszt, and a longtime friend of Wahnfried. A lively young woman, only eighteen years old, Winifred must have found her new household awesome and oppressive. The family's insistence that Siegfried find a wife had never dispelled their doubts about there being anyone good enough for the honor. Thus his older sisters Eva and Daniela regarded the newcomer with a mixture of jealousy and suspicion: to them she was young and needed guidance and train-

ing. Cosima was much the same "requiring her to write daily French exercises and dust the library for half an hour every morning"—tasks she afterward carefully inspected.[62] All fears about the succession, however, vanished as Winifred quickly bore four children—Wieland, Friedelind, Wolfgang, and Verena. Wahnfried became a house of two generations: downstairs all was noise and youth; upstairs sat Cosima, a skeletal figure, dressed in black, attended by her two daughters, Eva and Daniela. On rare occasions she could be seen, leaning heavily on Siegfried's arm as they walked in the *Hofgarten*; sometimes she visited Chamberlain after he had moved into the house across the road; but mostly she sat in her room, surrounded by mementoes of her life and cut off from the turbulence of the world outside.

Bayreuth experienced revolution more or less at second hand in 1918–19—from newspaper reports, rumors, and eyewitnesses of events in Munich, Berlin, and the other centers of major unrest. With only 30,000 inhabitants evenly divided between factory workers, public officials, and white collar employees, there was no hard nucleus around which the extreme left could organize. Food shortages, high prices, and unemployment caused by scarcities of raw materials resulted in minor demonstrations, but that was all. The Workers, Peasants, and Soldiers Council set up in November pursued a moderate, conciliatory policy, cooperating closely with existing local authorities, and the town remained surprisingly uninfluenced by radical developments in Munich.[63] Not that the local elite was free from fear: Cosima, for example, was briefly very alarmed that Wahnfried or the festival house might be targets of wanton destruction; but no violence actually occurred. The very peacefulness of Wahnfried and Bayreuth seemed, as if by contrast, to magnify the horror that Chamberlain, Wolzogen, and other members of the "inner circle" of Wagnerites felt at the chaos engulfing the Reich. It was as if there were "two Germanies," dramatically different but existing side by side: that of the small towns, shaped by the German past, and that of the large cities, violent, ruthless and nihilistic. The Wahnfried habitués shared the mixture of disgust and alarm, of racial hatred and religiosity that characterized Chamberlain's re-

sponse to early Weimar. Even Siegfried, often portrayed in later years as a moderate on the Jewish question, was prone to outbursts about the racial degeneracy of revolutionaries and the identicality of Bolshevism and Semitism.

Siegfried's energies were divided between his own compositions and the imposing task of resuming the *Festspiele*. Scarcities of necessary materials and of available rooms for guests in Bayreuth, coupled with higher wage rates and a rapid depletion of the festival funds through inflation, made the question of timing especially hazardous. Plagued by the belief that a premature and unsuccessful reopening would pile up such immense debts that the festival would be destroyed forever, he made extensive concert tours to raise money and went abroad to Scandinavia and, in 1924, to America (there, among others, he met Henry Ford whose public vendetta against Jewry aroused false expectations of a handsome donation). These tours brought in some revenue, but overall the results were disappointing, and the continuing spiral of inflation—at least until the end of 1923—made the task appear almost impossible. It was only in the summer of 1924, after some semblance of monetary stability had returned to the Reich, that the first post war festival took place, but even then its financial footing remained precarious and within five years it was again hard hit by economic collapse and nationwide depression.

When Chamberlain first heard Hermann Levi conduct the *Ring* at Munich in 1878, the very words Wagner and Bayreuth connoted artistic modernism, "the artwork of the future." Wagnerites overlapped the avant garde in all the arts, and a young devotee like Chamberlain—a founder of *Revue Wagnérienne*, admirer and friend of the Symbolists—considered himself emphatically "modern." Yet over the next three decades, as Wagnerian music gradually became more widely accepted, a conservative atmosphere descended over Bayreuth. And while Chamberlain might appreciate Adolphe Appia's startlingly new ideas for staging Wagner's music, or the psychological dramas of Ibsen and Strindberg, Cosima firmly resisted all new artistic experimentation; in fact there was little that she appreciated in any of the arts after 1885. After the war such resistance to the new in art became a central part of

Bayreuth's national mission; indeed, its outright rejection of the incredible wave of aesthetic experimentation that marked Weimar was the reverse side of its boast to be the shrine and mecca of the *völkisch* movement. Like everything else in these years, art was thoroughly politicized. In the eyes of the political right the abstractions of Klee and Kandinsky, the atonal "Jewish music" of Schoenberg and his disciples, as much as the irreverent antics of Dada or the proletarian theater of Piscator, were symptoms of the chaos and decadence that had overtaken Germany. Bayreuth—as Chamberlain, the composer Hans Pfitzner, and others never tired of explaining—was the antithesis of this "*blutleere Afterkunst*" of Weimar;[64] it was the home of German religious art, a link to the sacred heritage of Goethe, Schiller, and Beethoven, and the epitome of those national and racial values which alone could regenerate the Reich.

Most supporters of Bayreuth agreed in thinking that the future of the festival could only be assured if the mission of Wagnerism and the task of reviving the beleaguered spirit of nationalist Germany were widely recognized to be identical. In their efforts to achieve lasting financial stability for their cultural bailiwick the Wagners had always cultivated the rich and the powerful. Thus, aside from his patron Ludwig II of Bavaria, Richard Wagner requested help from Bismarck and wrote the tasteless *Kaisermarsch* of 1870 in the hope of procuring public funds or protection from the Hohenzollerns. Later Cosima endeavored to win over Wilhelm II and attempted to secure special concessions from the *Reichstag*. In fact, Bayreuth always used two strategies: that of winning direct protection from the Crown or the law-making body, and the more populist course of building a constituency among the wealthy German middle classes. After 1918 the situation was transformed. Protection from the Wittelsbachs was abruptly removed by revolution while the creation of a liberal republican Germany dashed any hopes of government subventions. Everything depended upon the sympathies of German *Bürgertum*, many of whose finances were badly diminished by more than a decade of high inflation. The rescue of Bayreuth, or so it seemed to Chamberlain, was linked to the material and

spiritual recovery of the German bourgeoisie, and ultimately to the replacement of Weimar by a *völkisch* nationalist state that would protect its sacred cultural inheritance. The nearest it came to achieving this goal was in the years after 1933 when Wahnfried received funds directly from Hitler and the festivals became almost state occasions, part of the elaborate ritual of the Nazi regime.[65]

Thus, with its characteristic blend of pragmatism and passion, the Bayreuth *Kreis* in the 1920s set about the task of forging closer links with the broad movement of *völkisch* politics. As we have seen, strong ideological and personal ties already existed: Hans von Wolzogen, for example, had long-standing contacts in anti-Semitic circles and Ludwig Schemann, as founder of the *Gobineau Vereinigung*, was in touch with a broad range of prominent politicians and thinkers of the German right. But it was Chamberlain above all who in his writings had joined the Bayreuth cult to the mainstream of the Germanic ideology, and his wartime success as a propagandist had strengthened and expanded both his fame and his personal contacts. His correspondents spanned the whole of the Weimar opposition from Tirpitz to demagogues like Dinter and Theodor Fritsch; his endorsement was eagerly sought after for cultural associations like the Fichte Society and for new racial and political publications; and postwar racial Christian sects, nationalist youth organizations, and counterrevolutionary groups usually numbered him among their spiritual and intellectual forebears. No longer capable of writing large numbers of essays himself, Chamberlain encouraged a new generation of Bayreuthians to do so: among the most prolific were Wolfgang Golther, Paul Bülow, Karl Ganzer, Karl Grunsky, Erich Schwebsch, Richard Du Moulin Eckart, Otto Daube, Georg Schott, and Paul Pretzsch. Together they launched a cultural offensive designed to convince Germans of the truth of Siegfried Wagner's national appeal in 1921: "Whoever loves Germany and wants to do something for its health and its future as a *Kulturvolk* must come to Bayreuth's assistance."[66] "Here," declared a typical article, "lie the roots of a new *Weltanschauung*, free of Jewish spiritual domination, which can guide the Volk—through a religious concept that cor-

responds to its very being—to economic and political autonomy."[67] Bayreuth, they argued, was "the flagship of the German spirit."[68]

For the most part, the new generation of publicists were mere epigoni, adapting the well-honed themes of Wagnerism to the mood and circumstances of post 1918 Europe, and their essays were largely undistinguished and derivative of earlier writers like Chamberlain, Wolzogen, Thode, and Leopold von Schroeder. In one area, however, a distinctly new beginning was made with the founding of the *Bayreuther Bund für deutsche Jugend* in August 1925 for those of 15 years and over. A special women's division of the Wagner Association had long existed, but this was the first effort to engage youth for the cause—an outgrowth of proposals made in the *Blätter* during the war and symptomatic of *völkisch* claims to represent the German future.[69] Under the leadership of Otto Daube, a young and energetic music teacher from Leipzig, the *Bund* expanded rapidly and by the summer of 1927 boasted 50 local branches, a monthly journal, and a long calendar of meetings, lectures, and other activities.[70] With the inner Wahnfried *Kreis* very sympathetic to the *Bund*, it quickly became a major part of the cult, and one which soon developed links with various elements of the *Bündische Jugend*. Thus, in July 1926, together with the *Adolf Bartels Bund*, another cultural youth group with a pronounced anti-Semitic outlook, Daube organized a German Festival in Weimar. Works by Wolzogen, Friedrich Lienhard, Siegfried Wagner, and Wilhelm Kotzde, the leader of the *Adler und Falken* youth group, were read or performed. Such authors, argued Daube, epitomized German art, in contrast to the mass-produced radio culture of the moderns; "a powerful counterforce to the aesthetic demoralization of our day," as Albert von Puttkamer called them. A second festival followed in 1929, and there were additional gatherings at the *Festspiele* in Bayreuth.[71] It was all part of a drive to awaken Germans to another Weimar (that of Goethe, Schiller, and Nietzsche as seen by the *völkisch* right) antithetical to the values and taste of the Republic which had appropriated the name. From its outset the *Bayreuther Bund* was welcomed by the Nazis as a friendly organization and later on it became a corporate member of the

party's youth movement. Chamberlain, like other members of the Wagner family, was an honorary member of its governing board.

The growing ties between Bayreuth and *völkisch* politics also opened up the complicated issue of whether Jews should participate as artists and visitors in the *Festspiele*. August Püringer, a vehement anti-Semite, suggested that they be excluded altogether. The language of Siegfried Wagner's reply in 1921, as quoted by his daughter Friedelind, was strongly critical.[72] "Among the Jews," he wrote, "we count a great many loyal, honest, and unselfish adherents who have given us numerous proofs of their devotion." To exclude such people would not be humane, Christian, or German; nobody should be banned "just because he is a Jew," he added, recalling the names of Davidsohn, Tausig, Porges, Rubinstein, and Levi. Foreigners, too, had played an important role in the Bayreuth story, at times when the German bourgeoisie were largely indifferent to Wagner. "On our Bayreuth hill we want to do positive work not negative. Whether a man is a Chinese, a Negro, an American, an Indian, or a Jew, that is a matter of complète indifference to us." "It is we," Siegfried concluded, "who must bear the blame for the hopeless state of affairs in our Fatherland because we have no national pride, because we leave our men in the lurch." Indeed, Germans might well "learn from the Jews how to stick together and how to give help. . . . I see how the Jews assist their artists. . . . If I were a Jew my operas would be performed in every theater. As things are, however, we must wait till we are dead."

Interpreting this letter is not easy: the sentiments are clear but in view of the rest of Wahnfried's activities the message rings false. Questions of color and ethnicity were not a matter of indifference at Bayreuth; and although Jews and foreigners had always participated in the cult, their special position and their inferior status to Germans was seldom allowed to be forgotten. Also, on other occasions, Siegfried had protested loudly against Jewish influence in the Reich and had courted the leading anti-Semites of the day. The emotional center of the letter would appear to be his angry reminder that Germans were responsible for the neglect of their culture, cou-

pled with a conviction that any assistance should be accepted in this year of Bayreuth's national appeal for funds. Any ban, such as that suggested by Püringer, would undoubtedly seriously injure the fund drive, and one can imagine the problems of defining who was a Jew and implementing an exclusionary policy. Cosima's policy, it will be recalled, had also been to accept help wherever it came from, and Chamberlain too made special exceptions for Jews like Hermann Levi or Friedrich Gross. Siegfried, like many contemporaries, detested "Jewishness" in the abstract, but often responded sympathetically to individual Jews. Yet this did not make him any the less an admirer of Hitler after 1923 nor, after the ravages of inflation in that year, any the less bitter about Jewry. His Christmas greetings to Nora Eidam, an old friend of the family, show quite another side of his personality: "The times of the Spanish Inquisition," he wrote, "have returned. Perjury and treachery are spoken of highly and Jew and Jesuit proceed arm in arm to eradicate *Deutschtum*. But perhaps Satan has miscalculated this time!"[73] Siegfried's views, we may conclude, were changeable: he preferred to stress the positive aspects of Germanness rather than negative hatred of the Jew, but such hatred was an inescapable, integral part of the Bayreuth Idea. The views of Chamberlain and other members of the "inner circle" on the issue of Jewish participation in 1921 have not survived, but it would seem that they too were not ready for any Aryan paragraph—both because they cherished exceptions and because the festival would almost certainly suffer as a result.

Just as Bayreuth solicited closer ties with the right, so *völkisch* political leaders welcomed these contacts, for association with Wagnerism enhanced their social and intellectual respectability and coupled their strivings with the legacy of German music. And for all his revolutionary rhetoric and abrasive anti-bourgeois style, no one wanted acceptance at Bayreuth more than Hitler. Since his adolescence in Vienna he had been a Wagner enthusiast; he talked incessantly about the composer and regarded the dramas as the highest expression of the German soul.[74] Entry into Wahnfried was for him like walking on holy ground; it also meant a special kind of social

acceptance that relieved his painful sense of being an outsider in bourgeiois society. On his frequent visits both before and after 1933, he even seemed to find amid the Wagner children a semblance of family life otherwise lacking in his exclusively political existence. As for Wahnfried, its members soon nourished extravagant hopes for their tribune-of-the-people and predicted a better future for Bayreuth as a consequence. Their relationship was always a two way street.

The Nazi movement made steady progress in the region of Franconia, and Bayreuth had an active *Ortsgruppe* from November 1922. Among its most energetic members were Hans Schemm, an elementary school teacher who later became Bavarian Kultusminister, and Christian Ebersberger, a businessman well known to the Wagner and Chamberlain families. Wahnfried, however, played little part in these local party activities during the first year, although—as Winifred Wagner remembered—news of Hitler's remarkable skill as a speaker and organizer reached the Wagner household as early as 1920 through visitors from Munich like Josef Stolzing-Cerny and Michael Georg Conrad (the German champion of Naturalism and an old acquaintance of the Bayreuth "inner circle"). In addition, as we have seen, Chamberlain had several of his own sources of information.[75] But it was not until October 1923 that Hitler entered Wahnfried and the relationship between him and the Wagners began.

The succession of crises that convulsed Germany in 1923 is familiar and requires no detailed recounting. The French invasion of the Ruhr in January to compel reparations payments produced passive resistance against the aggressors and this in turn triggered a sequence of events that brought the republic to the verge of political and economic disintegration. The Reich's currency and financial structure collapsed, resulting in a catastrophic inflation that wiped out the savings of millions of Germans; large-scale strike movements broke out in several areas; separatist agitation intensified in Bavaria; and plans for anti-republican coups were hastily drawn up by the *Freikorps* and the extreme right. By July 1923 the central government had no effective control over the country. In Bavaria, as prices and unemployment rose sharply, pressure upon the Kahr

Hitler in Bayreuth, September 30, 1923. Hitler is without his hat. Julius Streicher is diagonally in front of him.
Courtesy of Mr. Bernd Mayer, Bayreuth.

government increased and the numerous racist and paramilitary groups openly called for a march through the neighboring left-wing-controlled states of Thuringia and Saxony and on to Berlin. Impatient and anxious lest the opportunity slip from his grasp, Hitler directed all his energies toward uniting the Bavarian right and forcing the Kahr government to give the signal for decisive action.[76]

As part of the Nazi party's feverish propaganda activity in these months, Hitler came to Bayreuth on September 30 to address a German Day rally. After reviewing the local sections of the S.A. and its *Freikorps* allies, *Oberland* and *Wiking*, he gave a speech at the Reithalle. Some hours later he sent a message via Christian Ebersberger asking to see Chamberlain; they met briefly the same evening and, on the following morning, Hitler was invited to visit Wahnfried. He came, Winifred Wagner commented, "as a respectful admirer of the German genius Richard Wagner, not as a political agitator." He was shown over the house, stood in silence before the Master's

Deutscher Tag in Bayreuth.

Programm:

Samstag, 29. September 1923.

Ab 1 Uhr nachmittags: Empfang der auswärtigen Gäste am Bahnhof.
Ausgabe der Festabzeichen, Zuteilung der Unterkünfte etc.

Ab 8 Uhr abends: Begrüßungsabend unter Mitwirkung verschiedener Musikkapellen.
Ansprachen von Führern der nationalen Bewegung und zwar
für die National-Sozialistische Deutsche Arbeiter-Partei,
Oberland, Reichsflagge im Sonnensaal;
„ Bund Bayern und Reich: . . . Bürgerressource, Reichsadler;
„ Bund Blücher, Wicking, Jungdeutscher
Orden, Sturmtrupp Frankenland: Frohsinn;
„ alle übrigen Verbände: . . . Harmonie und Schloßdiele.

Sonntag, 30. September 1923.

6^{30} Uhr: **Wecken.**

9^{45} Uhr: **Abholen der Fahnen.**

11 Uhr: **Feldgottesdienst auf dem Exerzierplatz (Leopoldshöhe)**

1. Fanfarenruf
2. Militärgebet
3. Ansprache des Pfarrers
4. Weihe der Fahne
5. Niederländisches Dankgebet.

Hierauf geschlossener Abmarsch der Verbände in ihre Standquartiere.

1^{30} Uhr: **Sammeln zum Festzug** (Ort wird den Führern noch bekannt gegeben).

2^{30} Uhr: **Festzug durch die Stadt**

Straßenfolge: Aufmarsch in der Lisztstraße, durch Wahnfriedstraße, Richard Wagnerstraße, Opernstraße, Bahnhofstraße, Bürgerreutherstraße, Wilhelmstraße, Wilhelmsplatz, Schulstraße, Maxstraße (hier Gegenzug); kurz vor der Spitalkirche: Stehen des Zuges und kurzer Gedenkakt für die Gefallenen des Weltkrieges unter dem Geläute der Glocken. (Teilnehmer in Zivil nehmen Hut ab, Führer Hand an der Mütze) / / / Zug geht dann weiter durch: Sophienstraße, Friedrichstraße, Dammallee, Leopoldstraße, Kasernstraße, Heldstraße, Jean Paulplatz, Ludwigsstraße.

Der Vorbeimarsch erfolgt am neuen Schloßplatz vor unseren Führern und Ehrengästen.

Auflösen des Zuges und geschlossener Abmarsch der Verbände in ihre Standquartiere (Säle) vom Kutscherplatz.

Ab 4 Uhr: Vorträge in sämtlichen Sälen, sowie in der Markgrafenreithalle von den bedeutendsten Führern der nationalen Bewegung.

Ab 8 Uhr: Zusammenkunft in den bekannten Sälen.

Von den Rednern haben ihr Erscheinen fest zugesagt: Herr Adolf Hitler, Herr Weber, Herr Esser, Herr Dr. Klotz, Herr Sesselmann, Herr Dr. Herold, Herr Jonson, Herr Streicher u. a.

A German Day Program, 1923.
Courtesy of Bernd Mayer, Bayreuth.

grave, and held further discussions with Chamberlain, but did not, it seems, meet Cosima.[77]

The visit was a huge success. Hitler's genuine reverence for Wagner and regard for Chamberlain, his emotional promise to restore to Bayreuth full rights over *Parsifal*, and his burning conviction that the National Socialist movement would eventually rule Germany, all made a strong impression on the Wagner family. So enthusiastic was Chamberlain that a week later he made a public declaration of faith in the Nazi leader. It is remarkable not only for its contents, but also because Chamberlain had never before aligned himself so wholeheartedly with any political figure:

> Most respected and dear Herr Hitler:
>
> You have every right to be surprised at this intrusion having seen with your own eyes how difficult it is for me to speak. But I cannot resist the urge to address a few words to you. I view this, however, as an entirely one-sided act, i.e. I do not expect an answer from you.
>
> I have been wondering why it was you of all people—you who are so extraordinary in awakening people from sleep and humdrum routines—who recently gave me a longer and more refreshing sleep than I have experienced since that fateful day in August 1914 when I was first struck down by this insidious sickness. Now I believe I understand that it is precisely this that characterizes and defines your being: the true awakener is at the same time the bestower of peace.
>
> You are not at all, as you have been described to me, a fanatic; in fact, I would call you the complete opposite of a fanatic. The fanatic inflames the mind, you warm the heart. The fanatic wants to overwhelm people with words, you wish to convince, only to convince them—and that is why you are successful. Indeed, I would also describe you as the opposite of a politician—in the commonly accepted sense of the word that is—for the essence of all politics is membership of a party, whereas with you all parties disappear, consumed by the heat of your love for the fatherland. It was, I think, the misfortune of our great Bismarck that he became, as fate would have it (by no means through innate predisposition), a little too involved in politics. May you be spared this fate.
>
> You have immense achievements ahead of you, but for all your strength of will I do not regard you as a violent man. You

know Goethe's distinction between force and force. There is the force that stems from and in turn leads to chaos, and there is the force which shapes the universe. . . . It is this creative sense that I mean when I number you among the constructive men rather than those who are violent.

I constantly ask myself whether the poverty of political instinct for which Germans are so often blamed may not be symptomatic of a much deeper talent for state-building. In any case the German's organizational skills are unsurpassed (viz. Kiaochow!) and his scientific capacity is unequalled—in the essay *Politische Ideale* I pinned my hopes on this. The ideal kind of politics is to have *none*. But this non-politics must be frankly acknowledged and forced upon the world through the exercise of power. Nothing will be achieved so long as the parliamentary system dominates; for this the Germans have, God knows, not a spark of talent! I consider its prevalence to be the greatest misfortune; it can only drag us continually into the mire and ruin every plan for a healthy and revitalized fatherland.

But I am digressing, for I wanted only to speak of you. That you brought me peace is related very much to your eyes and hand gestures. Your eye works almost as a hand: it grips and holds a person; and you have the singular quality of being able to focus your words on one particular listener at any given moment. As for your hands, they are so expressive in their movement that they rival your eyes. Such a man brings rest to a poor suffering spirit!

Especially when he is dedicated to the service of the fatherland.

My faith in Germandom has never wavered for a moment, though my hopes had, I confess, reached a low ebb. At one blow you have transformed the state of my soul. That Germany in its hour of greatest need has given birth to a Hitler is proof of vitality; your actions offer further evidence, for a man's personality and actions belong together. That the magnificent Ludendorff openly supports you and embraces your movement: what a wonderful combination!

I was able to sleep without a care; nothing caused me to awaken again. May God protect you![78]

In January 1923, when the French army marched into the Ruhr, Chamberlain had predicted that if Germans worked for a "conscious shaping statecraft, organized on scientific prin-

ciples" the Reich would "in a few years succeed in ruling the whole world morally, intellectually and thereby in every other decisive aspect."[79] Now in Hitler he saw the savior of Germany in her "hour of greatest need." Ludendorff is clearly relegated to the role of a supporter of the movement. When the Munich *putsch* occurred a month later, there was no doubt in Wahnfried about who was its true leader. Always a hero-worshipper, in his last years Chamberlain had discovered a new idol. Nazi ideology seemed in many respects close to his own *Politische Ideale*, while in Hitler himself he saw the prospect of strong, race-conscious leadership which would firmly control the popular masses and forge a new national order.

With this letter Chamberlain became the first person of national and even international reputation as a writer to align himself with the Nazi movement; it brought elation at party headquarters in Munich. In Stolzing-Cerny's words, Hitler rejoiced "like a child;" "Herr Hitler," he added in a letter to Eva Chamberlain, "continually enthuses about Bayreuth and not least about the Wagner family and its charming children. We hope that our movement gains its objectives quickly, for then also Bayreuth will become what your great father wished."[80] At that moment Hitler was facing one of the most difficult decisions of his career: Chamberlain's faith in his historic destiny came, in the words of Joachim Fest, "as the answer to his doubts, as a benediction from the Bayreuth Master himself."[81]

Hitler and his inner circle of advisers had been planning a coup ever since May of 1923; how well their plans were formulated in early October and whether any mention had been made of them to Chamberlain will never be known. Whatever the case, the unsuccessful Beer Hall Putsch of November 9, far from dampening Wahnfried's enthusiasm for Nazism, confirmed and strengthened it. As it happened, Siegfried and Winifred Wagner were in Munich for a Wagner concert at the Odeon Theater and after witnessing the police fusillade outside the Feldherrnhalle and the rout of Hitler's followers, they brought the news back to Bayreuth. In name at least Chamberlain was also present, for the front page of the *Völkischer Beobachter* on that day carried a brief article of his along with

news of the events of the Beer Hall the previous night. Entitled "God Wills It!" Chamberlain's essay is an appeal for action:

> Breathless we stand and await the coming events; for everyone feels with a greater or lesser degree of certainty that we have reached a turning-point in world history. . . . we conclude that not merely human but divine forces are at work. The existence of *Deutschtum* and of Germanic thought is at stake in this action.

It ended with another obvious reference to Hitler:

> Admittedly we now painfully miss three million of the best Germans in our struggle against "the other Germany"; yet in between a new generation is growing up that promises to be worthy of its fathers. If they find a man whose heart beats in harmony with theirs—a born leader—then I shall not be anxious about Germany's future. And is it not whispered everywhere that the man has appeared and waits among us for this hour?

The failure of the *putsch*, followed by Hitler's capture and imprisonment on November 11 was viewed at Wahnfried as a tragedy; but nobody in the house believed it to be the end of the *Führer's* career. "We are deeply affected by this tragic fate," Chamberlain told his friend, August Ludowici, "Jew and Jesuit can now triumph again!"[83] Siegfried Wagner used almost identical words in a Christmas letter to Rosa Eidam, adding: "Should the German cause really succumb, then I will believe in Jehovah the God of revenge and of hate. My wife struggles like a lioness for Hitler!"[84] What had seemed to some observers bad comic-opera, took on epic qualities in the eyes of the Wagners. Winifred, in particular, once very much in the background, now emerged as a political activist. After speaking before the local Nazi group she published a particularly effusive declaration of support for Hitler, "this German man . . . who has taken upon himself the dangerous task of getting the working class to open their eyes to the inner enemy and to Marxism and its consequences." "I frankly admit," she wrote, referring to the whole Wahnfried household, "that *we* too stand under the spell of this personality, and that we too, who

stood with him in days of fortune, now hold true to him in his days of need."[85] Over the next months, together with Eva and Daniela Thode, she helped collect food, money, and clothing for the families of convicted Nazis and helped gather some 10,000 signatures on a petition to the state government for Hitler's release.

Chamberlain was also eager to reaffirm publicly his faith in the Nazis. He followed developments in the party closely and carefully studied a small volume of Hitler's speeches that appeared at the end of 1923.[86] On Christmas Eve, he published a brief essay, "The Touchstone," in the Pan-German *Deutsche Zeitung* which proclaimed that the litmus test of a true *völkisch* movement was "its choice of a leader." Rarely were true leaders drawn from the ranks of professional parliamentarians—"mostly it is some complete outsider, about whom nobody knows a thing; a man who arises out of the movement he calls forth." What Germany needed, he insisted, was not party resolutions and ministerial ordinances but a "roaring hurricane."[87] Then, on New Years Day 1924, he wrote his most adulatory letter yet, recording for a friend his impressions of Hitler; it was published some three months later to celebrate the *Führer's* birthday.[88] Forgotten in later years, it neatly illustrates the growing cult of Hitler, his transformation into a figure of mythic stature and even an instrument of the Divine. The *Führer*, he claimed, was one of those "rare beautiful beings [*Lichtgestalten*] . . . a true *Volksmensch*," a man of genuine simplicity, with a "fascinating gaze," whose words "always come directly from the heart":

> One can distinguish two classes of significant men, according to whether their head or heart dominates. I would definitely categorize Hitler as a man of the heart not because I rate his intellectual capacities low—on the contrary—but because the central organ, the source that kindles his passion and forges his thoughts is the heart. This distinguishes him from most politicians; he loves the Volk, he loves his German people with a burning passion. Here we have the core of his politics, his economic theories, his enmity toward the Jews, his battle against the corruption of values and so on.

Hitler, argued Chamberlain, had nothing in common with the

run of opportunist politicians—the word "opportunist," he noted, was introduced by the "Jew Gambetta." Whereas others built self-serving *Reichstag* coalitions he had embarked on a "war of destruction" (*Vernichtungskrieg*) against Germany's enemies. The prime characteristic of Weimar politics was obfuscation, intentional vagueness designed to bamboozle the nation; but the essence of Hitler's personality and politics was candor and directness; he was "a great simplifier" (*Vereinfacher*) who cut through the web of disingenuous phrases spun by others, said what he meant, and said it with a power, logic, consistency, and seriousness that won people "by storm." He could be understood by the simplest of men, and that was the secret of his "unprecedented effectiveness" among the "alienated workers." He alone was able "to convert them in bands to healthier views," destroying the power of Marxism and building another force in its stead.

Nor did Chamberlain recoil at the viciousness of Hitler's anti-Semitism. In a startling passage he announced his agreement with the Nazis and confessed that what drew him to Hitler was the faith that his angry speeches were blueprints for future action:

> Because . . . [Hitler] is no mere phrasemonger but consistently pursues his thoughts to an end and draws his conclusions from it, he recognizes and proclaims that one cannot simultaneously embrace Jesus and those that crucified him. That is the splendid thing about Hitler—his courage! . . . In this respect he reminds one of Luther. And whence comes the courage of these two men? It derives from the holy seriousness each has for his cause. Hitler utters no word he does not mean in earnest; his speeches contain no padding or vague, provisional statements . . . but the result of this is that he is decried as a visionary dreamer [*Phantast*]. People consider Hitler a dreamer whose head is full of impossible schemes and yet a renowned and original historian called him "the most creative mind since Bismarck in the area of statecraft." I believe . . . we are all inclined to view those things as impracticable that we do not already see accomplished before us. He, for example, finds it impossible to share our conviction about the pernicious, even murderous influence of Jewry on the German Volk and not to take action; if one sees the danger, then steps must be taken against

> it with the utmost dispatch. I daresay everyone recognizes this, but nobody risks speaking out; nobody ventures to extract the consequences of his thoughts for his actions; nobody except Hitler. . . . This man has worked like a divine blessing cheering hearts, opening men's eyes to clearly seen goals, enlivening their spirits, kindling their capacity for love and for indignation, hardening their courage and resoluteness. Yet we still need him badly: May God who sent him to us preserve him for many years as a "blessing for the German fatherland."[89]

The tenor of Chamberlain's description, his air of religious exaltation, and his determination to see in Hitler a messianic figure, closely resembles the responses of others who hurled themselves into the Nazi movement around this time. For Chamberlain Nazism was a crusade, a redemptive force such as he had yearned for in his wartime propaganda and even earlier; it was Wagnerism in politics with Ludendorff as a "Siegfried personality" "of childlike guilelessness" and Hitler a Parsifal who alone could recover the Holy Grail and heal the nation's wounds.[90]

The remainder of Chamberlain's life is uneventful. He had made his political choice and never wavered from it. Indeed Hitler's defiance of the Munich court, transforming ignominious defeat into a national propaganda victory, strengthened Chamberlain's faith in the Nazi leader. "Today more than ever," he congratulated Hitler, "we feel and cherish a love for you, trust in the purity of your being and have faith in the conquering power of your cause."[91] Ludendorff, who was acquitted of all charges, visited Chamberlain shortly afterward in Bayreuth while trying to gather votes for the *völkisch* block formed to fight the *Reichstag* elections of 1924. Hitler also wrote to him from the Landsberg jail, but these letters disappeared shortly after the end of World War II.[92]

From several friends and correspondents Chamberlain received reports of the tensions and cleavages within the party during Hitler's imprisonment—some complained of Streicher and Esser, others of Rosenberg or of the growing contempt within Nazi ranks for older leaders of the right like Ehrhardt

and Ludendorff. Chamberlain was dismayed by the factional squabbling, but offered no substantive opinions about it. "When a man stands," he told his architect friend, Ludwig von Hofmann, "with one foot in the next world, he sees many things in a new light. . . . I wish I could put several of the leaders of the *völkisch* movement in my place for a day. Their eyes would be opened. On the central issue—the sacred issue—we are all united; why haggle over lesser things? The old, petty failing of the Germans could bring a man to despair in this hour when unity is more necessary than ever."[93] Dinter, who rose rapidly in the party, becoming *Gauleiter* of the key state of Thuringia, soon began to make enemies by his personal crusade for a "positive" or racial Christianity and his bitter denunciations of Catholicism. Thus, on Chamberlain's seventieth birthday in 1925, while the Nazis and the nationalist press published long eulogies, Dinter gave his encomiums a special twist by warning that the *völkisch* movement was in danger of coming adrift from its spiritual moorings. Eager to avoid the potentially divisive issue of religion, Hitler moved cautiously to oust Dinter from his position of leadership in the Gau, and in 1927 replaced him with Fritz Sauckel.[94] Chamberlain left no comment on these tensions; probably he was too sick to pay much attention. But it is very possible that had he lived he too would have been disappointed by the growing organizational emphasis of party efforts and the downplaying of religious issues which might hamper its electoral ambitions.

Bayreuth's close identification with the far right was made especially clear when the *Festspiele* finally reopened in the summer of 1924. Nationalist colors flew on the *Festspielhügel*, nationalist *Verbände* held parades, and Ludendorff and Dr. Rudolf Buttmann, one of the leaders of the *völkisch* wing of the German Nationalists, made political speeches. At the end of *Meistersinger* the audience sang "Deutschland, Deutschland über alles" and petitions circulated urging the Bavarian government to order Hitler's release (10,000 signatures were collected in Bayreuth alone). Not long before the festival, Hitler had written to Siegfried Wagner expressing his deep regrets at not being able to attend; his hope, he admitted, had

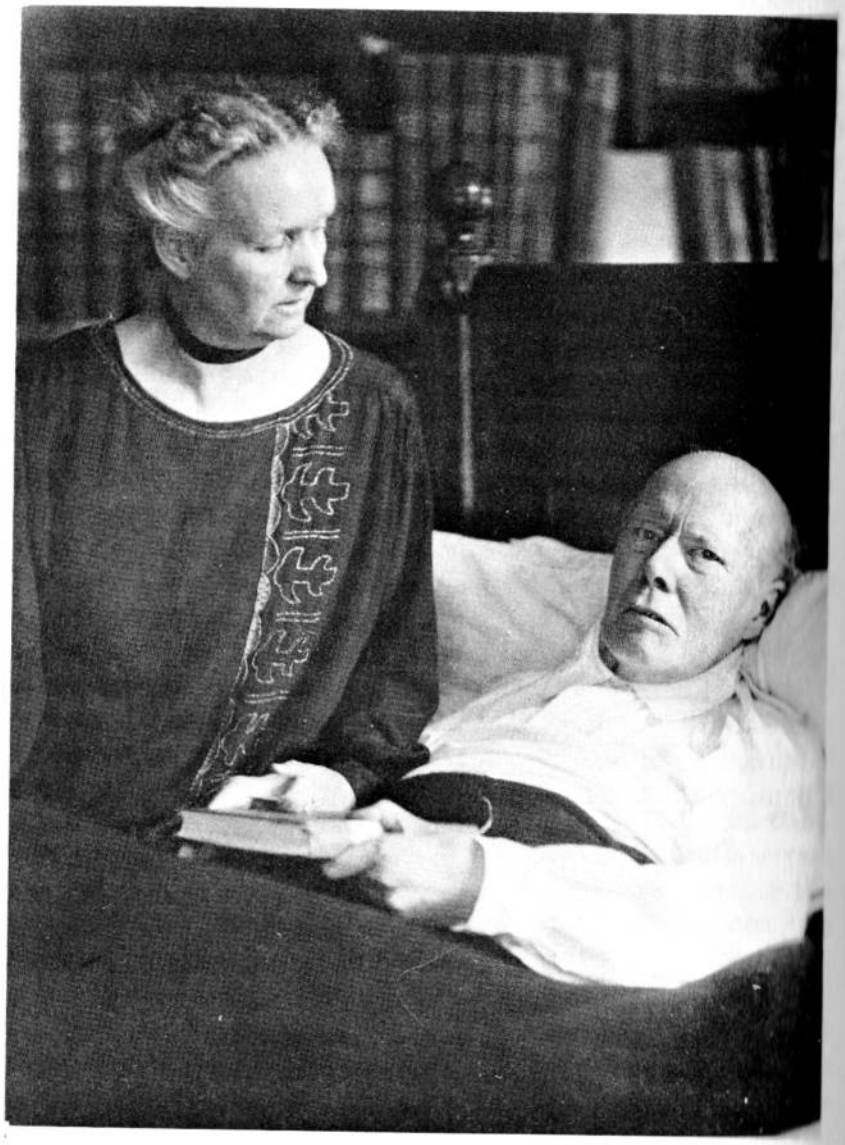
been to come to Bayreuth in triumph (it lay "on a direct line of march to Berlin") as "the first witness and herald" of the coming German rebirth. This, he added, would have been the best medicine possible for Chamberlain's rapidly declining health.[95] But Hitler's ambition to visit the festival was realized the following year, and after 1933 he came regularly and provided funds for the performances at critical movements. Gradually the festival changed: Siegfried and Cosima died in 1930, Winifred took over its direction, and a new era began.[96] The pre-war cosmopolitan atmosphere was not reestablished; audiences remained almost exclusively German and Nazi dignitaries were everywhere in evidence. This "nationalization" of Bayreuth went even further after the outbreak of war in 1939; in addition to party officials, convalescent soldiers, invalids, munitions workers, and nurses filled performances, brought there through the beneficence of the state. *Parsifal* was dropped from the Bayreuth repertoire, a casualty of the growing Nazi campaign against the churches and religion; ironically on his first visit in 1923, after seeing the Master's grave, Hitler had told the Wagners in an emotional outburst: "Out of *Parsifal* I will make a religion."[97] The last wartime festivals were little more than state rites—the final two, in 1943 and 1944, featured one work only, *Die Meistersinger*, now universally regarded as a Nazi hymn. The *Führer* himself was too busy to attend after 1941.

Chamberlain never saw any of this. After a long and painful illness he died on January 9, 1927 in his seventy-second year. The funeral service was attended by members of the Wagner family (with the exception of Cosima), friends like Dinter, civic leaders of Bayreuth, local Nazis, and representatives of the Pan-German League and *Bund Wiking*. Hitler attended in person for the National Socialists and Prince August Wilhelm came on behalf of the Hohenzollerns.[98] Chamberlain was eulogized as a prophet who had devoted his life to Wagnerism and Germany, and whose writings contained the vision of a new "glorious and light-filled future" for the German Reich. Just a few months before his death, he had been visited by Hitler for the last time. The staccato prose of

Goebbels' diary recorded the meeting:

> Shattering scene: Chamberlain on a couch. Broken, mumbling with tears in his eyes. He holds my hand and will not let it go. His big eyes burn like fire. Greetings to you spiritual father. Trail-blazer, pioneer! I am deeply upset. Leave-taking, he mumbles, wants to speak, can't—and then weeps like a child! Farewell! You stand by us when we are near despair. Outside the rain drums on the pavement! I want to cry out, to weep.[99]

These sentences indicate why Chamberlain occupied such a special place in the Nazi pantheon in later years. In 1926 the party's fortunes were at their lowest point; it had made a poor showing in state elections; Hitler was banned from speaking in much of the Reich and future prospects for the radical right seemed unencouraging. After the chaos of 1923, the Republic had achieved a degree of stability and public support in the era of Stresemann and Locarno. Hitler's genuine and lasting affection for Chamberlain and Wahnfried was due in no small measure to their continued faith and confidence in this difficult period. The obituary in the *Völkischer Beobachter* called Chamberlain "one of the blacksmiths whose weapons have not yet found in our day their fullest use," and later in the year Alfred Rosenberg published a brief study praising him as "the pioneer and founder of a German future."[100] Well before its attainment of power National Socialism had begun to make Chamberlain its own special prophet and herald.



Chamberlain and Eva shortly before his death

Epilogue

CHAMBERLAIN NEVER LIVED to see the Third Reich, but his name is forever associated with it. Few "precursors" acknowledged by the Nazis attained an equal status in the annals of the regime. This self-appointed prophet of Germanism became the subject of a vast array of speeches, articles, radio programs and school lessons. Many of his writings were reissued or anthologized, the dates of his birth and death were marked by solemn tributes in the party press, and a steady flow of doctoral dissertations proclaimed his significance for the creation of a new order in Germany.[1] "Chamberlain's world view," wrote one observer in 1936, "has become today the cornerstone of a new era. What he thought about the great epochal questions of human history . . . has today become the basic property of a great stream of culture."[2] After the defeat of the Third Reich he continued to be regarded as one of the leading Nazi doctrinaires and in the ever-expanding literature on Hitler routinely gains a mention as one of the tribe of pseudo-intellectuals and crackpots from whose works the *Führer* pieced together his own Germanic vision. Probably the most common image of Chamberlain today is that of a sick and broken man, clutching at Hitler's hand in October 1923, magnetized by the young politician's personal charisma.

But for all this it is exceedingly difficult with Chamberlain, as with other so-called ideological mentors of Nazism, to define his influence with any precision. The evidence is ambiguous and it is rarely possible to separate his impact from

that of other cultural critics, journalists, and popularizers of similar views who together played a major role in molding the consciousness and self-image of Germans. An examination of Nazi writings about him reveals that they fall into two broad categories. The first and by far the largest comprises the straightforward hagiographic literature designed to give Chamberlain a prominent niche in the Nazi gallery of ancestors, to place him alongside Fichte, Jahn, Lagarde, Nietzsche, and many others in one Germanic tradition of which National Socialism was said to be the legitimate spiritual descendant.[3] Repetitive, platitudinous, and unanalytical, these writings invariably have the same format—a brief summary of his life, large doses of praise for his campaign against racial decadence, a few comparisons with Nietzsche and other heroes, and a conclusion describing how Chamberlain had in the earliest years hailed Hitler as the Savior of the Reich. Another variant of this genre were articles devoted more specifically to his connections with Bayreuth and the importance of Wagnerism for the new Germany.[4] The second category of writings consists of somewhat more detailed and analytical accounts of aspects of Chamberlain's thought. Dissertations appeared about his "life doctrine" and the need for a Nazi methodology in science; there were attempts to ferret out a theory of history underlying the *Foundations*, and discussions of his interpretation of Indo-Aryan texts, Kant, and Goethe.[5] Most numerous of all were commentaries upon his religious ideas, primarily concerned to show the compatability of race and Christian doctrine, and to argue that Germanic Christianity was a necessary and integral part of a Nazi Revolution.[6] Taken together Chamberlain's works constituted the most sustained and ambitious attempt before 1933 to formulate a Germanic world view. His sweeping intellect moved easily across the fields of science, religion, philosophy, history, and the arts; and his writings contained an arsenal of facts and arguments to bolster racial opinions as well as being crafted with a clarity and style that few of his putative disciples could match. Though sometimes treated critically, in scope and method Chamberlain's works were generally well suited to become models for those charged with

providing a more systematic exposition of Nazi ideology after 1933 and with rewriting school texts in conformity with the basic tenets of the regime.

There is little question that Chamberlain's thought was permeated with many of the attitudes, values, and doctrines that formed the central themes of Nazi writing. Unlike many alleged forebears, his books required no skillful editing, abridgement, or drastic reinterpretation to square with the party line. In a negative sense especially, there was a striking family resemblance. Chamberlain's loathing for liberalism and Marxism, his attacks on finance capital and bourgeois materialism, and his obsessive focus on the sinister power of Jewry all foreshadowed the accusations of Nazism. Other affinities were equally evident: the theory of Teutonic or Aryan superiority, Germanized Christianity, agrarian romanticism and vague corporatist notions of social organization, to name only a few. But there were equally significant differences. Thus, until the last years of his life, Chamberlain was a staunch defender of monarchy; reverence for aristocracy and traditional German institutions pervaded much of his work. His preoccupation with spiritual and aesthetic regeneration, while echoed in some Nazi literature, was very different from the party's rhetoric of social and political revolution; indeed, Chamberlain all his life dreaded the kind of total political mobilization of every aspect of life that Nazi propaganda proclaimed as a goal. The parallels between Chamberlain's racism and the pseudoscientific race doctrines of the Third Reich are considerable, and the general outline of history put forward in the *Foundations* was repeated by scores of writers in the 1930s. But while the outward similarities were great, it must also be noted that in style and tone Chamberlain was more genteel and refined, his language generally less violent, and his arguments less crudely deterministic than many later race thinkers. Lastly, his writings were based on a firm sense of the role of a cultivated and educated elite in society. They had little in common with the class rhetoric and aggressive populism of much of Nazi propaganda, despite the superficial resemblances of romantic *völkisch* phraseology. In sum, although many of Chamberlain's

views pointed forward to the doctrines of Nazism, there remained conspicuous differences of style, values, and social perspective between them.

Among the chief problems with attempting to establish clear lines of continuity between Wilhelminian thinkers and Nazi ideology is the heterogeneous character of the latter. The Third Reich's propaganda proclaimed that a specific Nazi *Weltanschauung* existed, a coherent and unified set of attitudes and ideas appropriate to the new "fascist man." But, as historians have often pointed out, the reality was an extraordinarily confusing assortment of precepts and doctrines, some of which were conveniently ignored once the party assumed power. The Nazis' cynicism about ideas, their exploitation of party principles and the frequent divergence between the pronouncements of the regime and its practice have caused some scholars to largely ignore ideology in their work or to accept some variation of Hermann Rauschning's thesis that it was a mere intellectual coating, a collection of slogans and ill-conceived arguments, useful for manipulating the masses.[7] The thread of consistency in Nazi actions, it is often argued, was not ideological so much as a radical drive for power and conquest. Some historians have even gone a long way toward a functional explanation of Nazi racism, viewing it as a tool to which the elite had recourse to legitimize and bolster their power and to mobilize the nation for territorial aggrandizement.[8] The Nazi elite, it has been pointed out, were quite capable of contradicting the precepts of their alleged ideological forebears in domestic and foreign policy while continuing to praise them as heralds of the new order.

But it is a mistake to doubt the power of Nazi ideology, however crude and makeshift it may sometimes seem. Political and ideological factors were inextricably intertwined in Nazi policy: short term improvisations were often at odds with long term objectives and tactical and military requirements made it impossible to adhere to the avowed principles of the regime at every step. But the driving force of a crude and unsophisticated Social Darwinism, the geopolitics of *Lebensraum*, anti-Bolshevism, *völkisch* nationalism, and above all racial anti-Semitism in the history of the regime is undeniable. What the

class struggle is to Marxism, racial conflict was to Nazism: the reality underlying historical events, the central concept upon which the theory and practice of National Socialism was predicated. It was, Leonard Krieger has written, at once a "tenet of faith and operational ideal that threads pervasively through Nazi thought and action" from the beginning of the movement until its end.[9]

Yet, although it was the cornerstone of the official ideology, Nazi racism was confused and vague; it cannot be reduced to a well-defined, systematically argued, and theoretically precise set of doctrines. Here as in other areas, there was a good deal of diversity. Thus Hitler's outlook derived mostly from Wilhelminian *völkisch* traditions; he focused on hatred of Slavs and Jews and harnessed this to an intense national chauvinism, placing no importance upon technical questions like the exact criteria and characteristics of a race, and frequently muddling the concepts "race," "nation," and *Volk*. Himmler, in contrast, cherished a somewhat different supranational Nordic ideal, while further variations can be found in the work of Rosenberg and of race scholars like Hans F. K. Günther, whose writings were highly regarded by the party. No single theory prevailed, although all theories shared certain basic ingredients. What emerged, in other words, was a series of fundamental assumptions, which acted as the lowest common denominators of all Nazi racism—an obsession with racial "purity," the conviction that the modern era was characterized by a world struggle between Aryan and Jew, and the belief that other nations had become miscegenated and decadent, leaving Germany as the standard-bearer of Aryanism. Though elaborated and reformulated by an army of race experts in the twelve years of the regime, these ideas ultimately derived from nineteenth-century traditions and from the *völkisch* ideology disseminated in the period before 1914.[10]

In view of what has been said, it is hardly surprising that evidence for Chamberlain's direct influence on individual Nazis is both contradictory and inconclusive. Abundant documentation exists to show that the leaders of the party had at least a passing acquaintance with his writings. Even the most cursory glance at early recruits repeatedly turns up his name as

one of the most respected authorities on race, and he was obviously much cited in the early ideological debates of the movement. His well-publicized adherence to Hitler also probably brought it some new followers: W. S. Allen's analysis of the evolution of the party in Northeim in Lower Saxony, for example, refers to the town's first Nazi, a bookstore owner, as an admirer of Chamberlain.[11] At a more exalted level in the movement Hitler, Hess, Goebbels, Eckart, Himmler, von Schirach, and above all Rosenberg had read Chamberlain and professed to have been influenced by him. Hans Kerrl, the Minister for Church Affairs, and Hans Schemm, the Bayreuth schoolmaster who became Bavarian *Kultusminister*, were also firm admirers, while Nazi intellectuals such as Hans F. K. Günther, Alfred Baeumler, Walter Frank, Ernst Krieck, and the Nobel physicist Philipp Lenard showered him with filial respect.[12] Beyond these superficial traces of ideological linkage, however, it is difficult to proceed. In the case of Hitler, while he read the *Foundations*, Chamberlain's biography of Wagner, and some of the war pamphlets, it is fruitless to try to define the impression they made on him. The *Führer* was a fitful, erratic, and voracious reader who imbibed the contents of dozens of books, pulling out ideas and arguments that coincided with his basic outlook or could be adapted to it. His anti-Semitism, for example, reveals traces of Austrian Pan-Germanism, Gobineau, Lapouge, Chamberlain, Eckart, Rosenberg, Lanz von Liebenfels, and several others; and while portions of *Mein Kampf* (especially his discussions of the characteristics of the Aryan) seem to echo the *Foundations*, the sources for the book were numerous and all were transmuted and remolded by Hitler. The mental world of the other Nazi leaders was equally eclectic and loosely defined. They were administrators and politicians concerned with the exercise of power; theoretical precision and the academic quest for compatibility of ideas were not their concern. Thus, Himmler praised Chamberlain's essays on race and clearly shared many of his ideas, but he also found portions of Chamberlain's writings "hard to read" and "hard to understand" and his astrological and occultist leanings would have appeared sheer nonsense to Chamberlain.[13]

Of the chief personalities of the Third Reich only Alfred Rosenberg can properly be called a Chamberlain disciple. When as a youth in Riga he first encountered the *Foundations*, it struck him with the force of a revelation. "Another world rose up before me: Hellas, Judah, Rome. And to everything I assented inwardly—again and yet again. And then I ordered Wellhausen's *History of Israel and Judah* and Bernhard Stade's *Bible Research* and other books of that kind. . . . The political events that happened later therefore seemed to me a necessary commentary." Eight years later, in 1917, he occupied himself studying Chamberlain's *Goethe* and *Kant*, and read aloud most of the latter to his wife while spending a few weeks in the Crimea.[14] Nor did he tire of these books, but continually returned to them for inspiration, citing Chamberlain not only as an authority on race, but also on politics.[15] Rosenberg's chief work, *Der Mythus des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts* [*The Myth of the Twentieth Century*, 1930], which became one of the central texts of Nazi ideology, reflects the extent of his debts throughout its 700 pages. Its general historical outline, discussion of Christ's racial heritage, anti-Romanism, and attacks on church doctrine—even its phraseology and use of a concept like *Völkerchaos*— all hark back to the ideas of his English mentor. And while many historians have downgraded the importance of Rosenberg, viewing him as a somewhat pitiful figure on the periphery of power, it should not be forgotten that as the *Führer*'s plenipotentiary for ideological training and education, he exercised a considerable authority over cultural and church affairs. Furthermore, through its inclusion in school and training college syllabi and its adoption for SS courses, *Der Mythus* achieved a large audience. As Robert Cecil has observed, Hitler's comments on the work were by no means all critical, and there is some reason for believing that Rosenberg's early influence on him has been underrated in the light of later events.[16]

In the final analysis it is less rewarding to speculate about the influence of Chamberlain on specific individuals or groups within the Nazi movement than to consider the general legacy of pre-war *völkisch* thought. Spanning the period from the 1880s until the 1920s, Chamberlain's career as a publicist

is well suited for that purpose. His writings illuminate in particular the character and appeal of Teutonic or Aryan racism in the years before the First World War and show how widespread anti-Semitism had become as an integral part of a broad "Germanic ideology." Most of the basic ingredients of Chamberlain's thought were already present in the works of Treitschke, Lagarde, Duehring, Wagner, and others; his own contribution was to elaborate and update their vision, incorporating more systematically the findings of racial "science" and adapting it to the complicated mood and changed circumstances of the *Weltpolitik* era. Although sometimes regarded as a peripheral figure, isolated from the mainstream of German and European culture, Chamberlain was in fact very much a product of his times, shaped by the dominant intellectual currents of the nineteenth century. Whether it was neo-Kantianism, modern biblical criticism, Darwinian ideas, neo-idealism in history, or the critical reevaluation of positivist science, Chamberlain faced on some level the major intellectual issues confronting contemporaries. His formulations may appear totally unsatisfactory today, but to many readers at the time they had a distinct appeal providing a pseudo-scientific justification for German aspirations to world power and disclosing a mixture of racial pride, cultural ambivalence, and political uneasiness prevalent among middle- and upper-class Germans. His influence on Rosenberg and Hitler has often been the subject of speculation, but equally it should be remembered that he won the friendship and esteem of such diverse personalities as, for example, Kaiser Wilhelm, Ernst von Wolzogen, Heinrich Class, Hermann Keyserling, Paul Deussen, and Otto Pfleiderer. Intellectually and emotionally, Chamberlain was very much a Wilhelminian.

There is considerable disagreement among historians about the extent and significance of German anti-Semitism in the two decades before 1914. In part the controversy arises from different definitions of the subject: some scholars limit their focus to parliamentary parties and other explicitly political or governmental forms of prejudice; others adopt a broader approach examining many areas of national life outside the political arena. Another related problem is the

increasingly abstract quality of anti-Semitism in the 1890s and the way that antipathy toward Jews or Jewishness was integrated into a broad structure of beliefs and values, a conservative and nationalist cultural stance. A book such as Chamberlain's *Kant*, for example, may well be viewed as only minimally anti-Semitic: comments on Jews occupy very little space in its pages. And yet in the context of Chamberlain's overall philosophy, our judgment would be quite different. The point is that for liberal and Jewish contemporaries in the years before 1914, and for us today, it is often extremely difficult to assess the importance of anti-Jewish turns of phrase or racial stereotypes when they form just one constituent element in a much larger and more complicated structure of ideas and attitudes. In the opinion of this writer, anti-Semitism of varying forms and intensity permeated the political and cultural views and the vocabulary of large numbers of Germans before 1914. Cultural reform movements like Wagnerism, books such as the *Foundations*, campaigns by pressure groups and political parties, and a host of other religious, literary, occupational, and social associations helped promote this prejudice and fostered an atmosphere of tolerance for anti-Semitic viewpoints. Though not at the forefront of national politics, anti-Semitism was very much a part of the ethos and mental style of the German right.

The hardships and national humiliation of the first World War further radicalized *völkisch* ideology and broadened the appeal of anti-Semitic politics. Racist elements, in particular the Pan-Germans, achieved a more prominent place in the counsels of the right, and publicists like Chamberlain by their association with the annexationist cause gained an even wider and socially more diverse readership than earlier. Since the 1890s the distinction between "popular" and "intellectual" anti-Semitism had been considerably eroding; the war continued and extended this process, further dismantling the barriers of tone and style that had separated "scholarly" or "middle brow" anti-Semitism from more populistic strains. Not only did the letters of Chamberlain's cultured correspondents in the first years of Weimar at times sound like the rantings of anti-Semitic political agitators, but figures like Artur Dinter, whose

demagoguery was cloaked in pretentious pseudo-scholarship, took over and vulgarized pre-war "Germanic ideology" for the widest possible consumption.[17] After 1923 the tide of anti-Semitism receded and the republic enjoyed a brief period of economic recovery and relative political stability, but the legacy of the previous crisis years was all too evident in the ideology of Nazism and other racist movements founded in the wake of the November revolution.

National Socialism was the inheritor, although not the only one, of *völkisch* ideology. This does not imply that earlier thinkers envisioned Nazi policies of terror and violence, culminating in racial genocide. The anti-Semitism of Chamberlain and other Wilhelminian figures discussed in this study was not exterminatory: their most extreme utterances called vaguely for legislative restrictions which would have reduced Jews to the status of resident aliens with specific positions in society closed to them and no voice in political affairs.[18] Most of the time these anti-Semites offered no solutions at all—their anti-Semitism was more of a "defensive" creed, a language for defining German values and exhorting cultural rebirth, than an offensive prescriptive doctrine demanding specific action against Jews. But, as we have seen, the racism of Chamberlain and others contained marked dynamic and messianic elements that could easily be fashioned into advocacy of more forceful retaliatory measures. Nazism did this: it acted like a reflector, catching the rays of *völkisch* ideology and retransmitting them in a much intensified form. Nazi racial policies grew out of a nexus of ideology, the though patterns and psychology of the leading Nazis, the process and methods by which the party obtained and consolidated power, and finally the circumstances of a total war. It is a mix that defies precise analysis, but significantly, these policies were phrased in the same terms—the same language, stereotypes, symbolism, and patterns of argument—as those employed by pre-war *völkisch* thinkers. Though a revolutionary departure in German political life in so many ways, National Socialism inhabited the same "semantic field" as racist nationalism during the *Kaiserreich;* it drew upon the latter, but radicalized and transformed its meaning.[19]

This is a part of the reason why so many conservative Germans, faced with economic depression and the political failures of Weimar, placed their hopes in Nazism. When Chamberlain met Hitler in October 1923 he looked on him as one who shared his own attitudes and beliefs; he viewed Hitler as an exponent of pre-war ideas who had allied them with a new dynamic political practice more suited to the republican era. Many others made the same error; many simply ignored the aspects of Nazism they found deplorable. Recently a number of regional analyses of the Nazi party have appeared which trace in detail its evolution from a small fringe group to a mass movement. They have focused primarily upon the novel structure and propaganda techniques of the party, and have in several cases cast strong doubts upon the significance of anti-Semitism in drawing recruits to the party and in attracting votes after 1929. In the case of Northeim, for example. W. S. Allen has argued that many who flocked to National Socialism just "ignored or rationalized" its hatred of Jews; similarly, in a fine monograph on Bavaria, Geoffrey Pridham concluded that "although they had warnings in the racialist hatred of Nazi speakers who made threats about the position of Jews in the future Nazi state, the majority of voters did not seem to realize how seriously the Nazis meant to put their ideas into practice."[20] Leaving aside the complex issue of voter motivation, what is more relevant in the present context is the simple fact that virulent rhetoric and threats against Jews did not deter voters. Anti-Semitic agitation over a long period not only created a large pool of racist activists in Germany, it also helped to de-sensitize large numbers of others to the dangers of racial hatred, and to the possibility that brutal rhetoric might one day be translated into murderous action. Discussing the crisis of early Weimar, Werner Jochmann concluded that in 1923 "while one large part of the population hated and despised Jews, the other, just barely the majority, had either inwardly given them up or showed no inclination to get involved on their behalf."[21] Ten years later, when another period of national crisis brought Hitler to the helm of Germany, a similar combination of prejudice, insensitivity, and indif-

ference prevailed. The legacy of Chamberlain and others like him is then twofold: it lies both in the influence they had on the evolution of an anti-Semitic right wing politics in Germany and in the slow process by which so many became anaesthetized to the deadly possibilities inherent in ideological Jew hatred and racial argumentation.[22]

Appendix

The Foundations in Britain and the United States

Chamberlain grew increasingly critical of Britain and the United States in the years before 1914. He dismissed their parliamentary institutions and liberal ideals as a sham, depicted their artistic and cultural life as frivolous and commercialized, and claimed that even the English language was debased and no longer an appropriate medium for the advancement of knowledge. Some of these opinions were published, but they were mostly confined to private correspondences until Chamberlain launched his wartime polemics. Considering the German nationalist flavor of his writing, his early reputation in England and the United States was surprisingly favorable. Admittedly, some reviewers were passionately critical but many were positive: in sharp contrast to the bitter denunciations of "the renegade" or "turncoat" Englishman that appeared after the outbreak of war.

In Britain and the United States, as in Central Europe, it was the *Foundations* which brought Chamberlain renown. His biography of Wagner, translated into English by Ainslie Hight in 1897, received widespread attention in musical circles, so did his passionate defense together with William Ashton Ellis of the "orthodox" Wagner against Ferdinand Praeger.[1] But these were limited successes. Even the *Foundations* drew only brief comment in the Anglo-American press (except for German-language newspapers in the United States), until it was published in English by John Lane in 1910.[2]

The story behind the English translation is long and tangled. As early as 1902, Chamberlain informed Kaiser Wilhelm that a Dr. Strong, who was librarian for the House of Lords, wanted to undertake the translation. He was prevented, or so it was alleged, by

Sir Rowland Blennerhasset, an "Irish ultramontane" and Germanophobe who "ran from publisher to publisher to incite them all against my work."[3] Whatever the truth of the matter, during the next few years the project lay dormant, and was not revived until 1908—and then from an unexpected quarter. Unknown to Chamberlain, Anna had secretly contacted W. H. Dawson, a lecturer in history at Edinburgh University. He in turn passed the matter on to John Lees, a friend and lecturer in German at Aberdeen, who agreed to provide an English translation for a fee of £100 and a percentage of the royalties.[4] It was probably an attempt by Anna to regain Houston's affection; they had been separated for some time and she was eager to reopen contact between them. It backfired from the beginning: not only was Chamberlain deeply distressed by this meddling in his affairs but he was also outraged by the efforts of John Lane, the proposed English publishers, to scale down his fees and royalties.

Eventually an agreement was made; Lees started the translation and Chamberlain switched his efforts from obstructing the book to trying to assure that it would gain a favorable response. To this end, in November 1908, through his brother Basil, he contacted Lord Redesdale, a diplomat, scholar, and close friend of Edward VII. Redesdale, whose admiration for this book was known, was asked if he would write a brief introduction to the English edition, since "the work of a totally unknown writer may fall flat, whereas if duly introduced, it might succeed."[5] His Lordship agreed, although he did not know Chamberlain, and in this fashion unwittingly embarked on a course which made him Chamberlain's chief spokesman and helper in England before 1914—something that proved to be a considerable embarrassment to him in subsequent years.

Redesdale's involvement with the work became progressively larger as he entered into a friendly correspondence with Chamberlain and when it became clear that Lees's translation was completely unsatisfactory to the author. After reading proofs of the translation in December, Chamberlain once more thought of scuttling the whole enterprise, or of disclaiming any responsibility for it. Appalled by Lees's work he wrote: "It is a mere verbatim rendering of German words into English words, often also into Scottish dialect." He added: "No wonder that fool man got through the whole in three or four months." Lees was understandably irritated by Chamberlain's verdict on his work: "You will readily understand," he informed the publisher, "that I cannot step aside at this juncture. My professional reputation is at stake and it is my firm determination to protect it by every means in my power."[6] Lees ascribed Chamberlain's atti-

tude to Anna's involvement in the project. In fact, all the correspondence—and there is a great deal of it—points simply to both Houston and Basil's dissatisfaction with the style and tone of the English version.

The result, in any case, was that Lees continued his work while Redesdale, at Chamberlain's entreaty, took a larger role correcting and revising the translation. (Lees, who was deeply hurt by the whole episode, could—had he known—have taken some satisfaction from the fact that Chamberlain was equally appalled by the French version—"an atrocious, bad translation").[7] The young lecturer succumbed quietly to the awesome Redesdale and soon accepted all his suggested changes without a murmur: from the exchange of letters it is evident that his Lordship's responsibility for the book reached far beyond the introduction with which he was credited. As for Chamberlain, he was deeply flattered by Redesdale's devoted and patient efforts, recognizing that his close association with the book guaranteed a sympathetic hearing in the British press.

Well before the translation was finished, Redesdale began to prepare the way for the forthcoming book. In January 1909 he wrote and had privately printed "An Appreciation" of the *Foundations*, which he dispatched to a wide circle of influential friends. (The same essay was later printed as an introduction to the book.) The "Appreciation" was a long paean to Chamberlain's genius: it described the book, gave a brief account of its author, and offered a mild and sympathetic interpretation of its main themes. Redesdale saw in Chamberlain an honest, kind-hearted, and cultivated inquirer after truth:

> To me the book has been a simple delight—the companion of months—fulfilling the highest function of which a teacher is capable, that of awakening thought and driving it into new channels. That is the charm of the book. The charm of the man is his obviously transparent truthfulness. Anything fringing on fraud is abhorrent to him, something to be scourged with scorpions. And in one passage he himself says the enviable gift of lying has been denied to him.[8]

It is astonishing how eager Redesdale was to embrace the vision of Chamberlain. He was enthralled by the sections on Greece and Rome, on Christ, "the mephistic vapours of Roman dogma and Roman imperialism," and the significance of race; he noted enthusiastically that the Teutons were north Europeans and included the Celts and the races that inhabited Britain. Of one aspect alone was he critical: Chamberlain's anti-Semitism. He accepted the account of the origin of the Jewish race, acknowledged "the stubborn

singleness of purpose and dogged consistency which have made the Jew what he is," but insisted that Jews had rendered great social, economic and political services.[9] In January 1914, in the *Edinburgh Review*, he added: "It would almost appear as if the low Polish Jew, whom we see in the sweated tailor of the East End, had sat as model for his [Chamberlain's] picture, but even he . . . is what persecution and evil surroundings have made him."[10]

Among the recipients of Redesdale's "Appreciation" was Edmund Gosse: poet, essayist, and cultivator of literary connections; he enjoyed an inflated reputation on the Continent as a literary critic and was a natural target for Redesdale's efforts to publicize Chamberlain. Gosse, at that time librarian to the House of Lords, was also a terrible snob, eager to please his coroneted friends: he responded warmly, praising Redesdale's essay and welcoming the idea of an English edition of the *Foundations*. The Conservative leader A. J. Balfour also expressed his thanks and described Redesdale's essay as "exactly what I wanted"; among the Liberals, Viscount Morley, Secretary of State for India, and R. B. Haldane, Secretary for War, were both encouraging in their remarks, although Haldane clearly had some reservations about Chamberlain's views. Another correspondent, Lucien Wolf, the editor of *Jewish World* and a prominent spokesman for British Jewry, replied politely—doubtless relieved that Redesdale had carefully disassociated himself from anti-Semitic prejudice but also troubled by the imminent appearance of Chamberlain's work in English: he foresaw, he told Redesdale, that he would find much to quarrel with in the forthcoming book.[11] Little should be inferred from these letters: the replies were very brief and people are rarely quite candid in assessing the literary enthusiasms of friends, even less when the author is a peer and a friend of the King—politeness and propriety easily stifled more exacting evaluation of Redesdale's essay or its subject.

While Redesdale sought to awaken interest in the forthcoming translation, publisher John Lane began to line up prospective reviewers. "I am now," he wrote, "considering the best men in this country to write special articles on the book." Chamberlain was asked to suggest names "of well-known men in this country who would be in sympathy with your work."[12] How significant these special efforts were is difficult to gauge. Certainly, after its appearance in December 1910, the translation was widely reviewed. In the same month *The Times Literary Supplement* announced: "this is unquestionably one of the rare books that really matter," and described

Chamberlain as, "a remarkable literary force [who] has in recent years made [his] appearance in German literature." There followed a well-crafted review that expounded the basic themes of the book, praised its style, and acknowledged calmly that the author's "judgments of men and things are deeply and indisputably sincere and are based on immense reading." The reviewer did not proclaim his wholehearted agreement; rather his tone is a mixture of enthusiasm and determined noncommittal. Here was an excellent, imaginative and weighty book that deserved to be read seriously. In general, the aggressive, brutal side of Chamberlain was downplayed: "It would be unfair to confuse Mr. Chamberlain's attitude toward the Jew with the crudities of anti-Semitism; yet he unquestionably regards the Jew—partly because he, like the Teuton, has the mysterious strength of pure race—as a most dangerous force in modern life." The reviewer was clearly troubled by the handling of "the Jewish question" but also unwilling to dispense with racial categories altogether: "While we admit," he wrote, "as we probably must, the broad truth of his account of Judaism and the Jews, it is certainly not true that every Jew reflects in every particular the character of his race. . . . nor is it true that race character itself is a dead unchangeable thing, cast once for all in an iron mould." [13]

Redesdale was overjoyed at public reactions: "The book," he informed Chamberlain jubilantly in December 1911, "has been much read and by the best people. Wherever I go I am asked all manner of questions about 'the wonderful Mr. Chamberlain.'" During Redesdale's visit to the First Lord of the Admiralty, Winston Churchill, the latter "at once launched into unmeasured praise of the *Grundlagen*, the English version of which was lying on his table." [14] The "fortuitous" presence of the book before Churchill when the Baron arrived serves once again to remind us that the desire to please him undoubtedly colored response among the political and social elite and was a major factor in the work's success. Reviews multiplied: *The Athenaeum* and the *Bookman* were mixed in their response; so was the *Quarterly Review*. Each recognized that this was an important book but were troubled by its vision of history as "an Iliad of conflict between German and Semite." Provincial newspapers like the *Birmingham Daily Post* and the *Glasgow Herald* were, as Colin Holmes has pointed out, more enthusiastic, while the *Spectator* called the book "a monument of erudition." Specific assertions and arguments came in for sharp criticism but most commentators were disposed to dwell on the positive qualities of the *Foundations*. "It is," concluded

the *Review of Reviews*, "impossible to withhold admiration for the vast learning, the splendid critical acumen, and the deductive manner in which facts are marshalled in support of the thesis." [15]

Two responses to the English edition of the *Foundations* further illustrate the strange appeal it could exert, at least among literary-minded Germanophiles. In June 1911 *Fabian News* printed an astonishing panegyric by G. B. Shaw. Its extravagance reveals what we might call "the other side" of Shaw—his elitist scorn for democracy, the autodidactic quality of his learning, and the deep confusions and contradictions in his ideas—all overlaid by the Shavian love of paradox and assertion. "This very notable book," he began, "should be read by all good Fabians"; "it is a masterpiece of really scientific history," and, "It will show many Fabians what side they are really on, lifting them out of mere newspaper and propaganda categories into their right camp." Shaw delighted in Chamberlain's unconcealed bias, his bold generalizations "as distinguished from the crowd of mere specialists . . . and accumulators of hard dead data"; he applauded Chamberlain's firm protest "against the lumping together under the general name of 'Humanity' of people who have different souls." Nonetheless, Shaw disagreed that the battle between Teuton and Chaos still raged, concluding that the Chaos had triumphed and with it superstition, national conceit, militarism and mediocrity: the "short round skull" of a British greengrocer, more than that of the Jew, turns out to be the deadly adversary of G. B. S.[16]

No less enthusiastic, according to the researches of Emile Delavenay, was D. H. Lawrence, who read the book in 1911 and discovered that it synthesized many of his own thoughts about art, the mystique of blood, and the mechanical, disintegrated amorphous character of modern mass society. Among the several intellectual influences swaying Lawrence in the direction of a profoundly irrational and elitist vitalism, Chamberlain, in Delavenay's view, was the most effective—the essay on Hardy, *Twilight in Italy*, *The Rainbow*, and especially his *Movements in European History*, published in 1919, are said to have been shaped by the dialogue between Lawrence and the *Foundations*.[17] No adequate evidence exists for testing Delavenay's assertions and, in any case, Lawrence used and transformed what he read so drastically that it bore little resemblance to the original—yet it is quite plausible that this English Germanophile and Wagner enthusiast found the message of Chamberlain enticing.

English readers were, not surprisingly, far better disposed toward Chamberlain before than after 1914. They read the book because its entry onto the book market was well-prepared and because it was

known to have created an immense impact in Germany. For all the chauvinist antagonism between the two nations each was deeply intrigued by the other: Germans were deeply ambivalent about England; Englishmen, critical of their own land, often found the answer to these deficiencies in their illusions about the Reich. Reviewers in both countries were highly receptive to this new brand of dilettantism, with its extravagant flattery of "the northern races." But while anti-Semitism in Britain had recently been fanned by an influx of Jews from Russia and an acrimonious public debate over immigration restrictions, there is no evidence that this enhanced sales of the book. What occasionally surfaces in contemporary comments is an older, snobbish disdain for Jews rather than the more political anti-Semitism so common in Germany. Jewish writers were sometimes greatly troubled by Redesdale's efforts on behalf of so notorious an anti-Semitic work but most were like Lucien Wolf who informed Claude Montefiore, President of the Anglo-Jewish Association, that a public refutation of Chamberlain would merely serve to draw attention to the book.[18] In general, then, until World War I Chamberlain received guarded praise in the land of his birth: even as late as 1915, in his Creighton lecture, James Bryce described him as "an able and very learned Anglo-German writer." But the war soon brought a sudden change of opinion. Chamberlain was depicted as the "Turn-coat son of Britain," a "renegade," and his literary success was deemed "one of the measures of the demoralization of the German intelligence by the religion of *Macht*."[19]

In the United States too the war marked a similar turning-point in Chamberlain's reputation, although his *Foundations* never aroused there the degree of interest it had on the other side of the Atlantic. The original German version achieved a number of reviews, mostly reserved or critical in tone, but again it was the English edition which first spurred any wider public interest. Certain pro-German figures such as Professor John W. Burgess of Columbia University and Senator Albert T. Beveridge professed to be strongly influenced by the book; so did the Immigration Restriction League, at the time engaged in a campaign to curb the free entry of "non-Aryan elements" into the country. Madison Grant, for a quarter century the Vice President of the League, was especially impressed by Chamberlain, and his own racial treatise, *The Passing of the Great Race* (1916) was to bear traces of its European counterpart. Henry Cabot Lodge, Prescott F. Hall, and Alfred P. Schultz were among the chief adversaries of the new immigration into America who found sympathetic ideas in Chamberlain.[20] Another was Ellery

Sedgwick, the dynamic editor of the conservative and genteel *Atlantic Monthly*. "Not, I think, since my boyhood days, when I first surrendered to the fascination of Buckle," wrote Sedgwick to Chamberlain, "have I been so stimulated by a product of contemporary thought." He also requested an essay which "will apply to the U.S. those principles which you deduce from your consideration of the hybridization of races," noting that "if the results which you describe are inevitable, they must show themselves in sharper outline in this country than elsewhere in the civilized world."[21]

The most famous reviewer of the *Foundations* was Theodore Roosevelt, who found the book brilliant and suggestive, if also full of "startling inaccuracies and lack of judgment." Yet, despite its defects, the ex-President was obviously attracted by its illiberal and inegalitarian doctrine: he especially sympathized with Chamberlain's denunciation of "the prevalent loose and sloppy talk about the general progress of humanity, the equality and identity of races, and the like." Chamberlain was at the least a beneficial antidote to "well-meaning and feebleminded sentimentalists." Quite different was the response of Lyman Abbott, chief editor of the same magazine (*The Outlook*): "We do not know where one would find anti-Semitic prejudice more intense or the grounds for it more skillfully marshalled, or misrepresentation of a people more artistically presented than in this work."[22]

Most surprising for the exaggerated nature of his response was the distinguished historian Carl Becker, who wrote a long and eulogistic review for the New York magazine *Dial*. "On every page," he asserted, "wide and accurate knowledge, masterly grasp of an immense subject, the profound reflection of a powerful mind, and courage" were displayed. Though at first hesitant about Chamberlain's use of the race concept, Becker brushed aside these doubts in his eagerness to enter the mood of the book, to experience its intuitive judgment of history from within: "among historical works," he argued, it was, "likely to rank with the most significant of the nineteenth century." "One despairs," he added, "of conveying any adequate idea" of its "intellectual mastery," "keen analysis," "brilliant originality," and "trenchant humor."[23]

For all Becker's enthusiasm few Americans turned to the book; it was very Eurocentric in design and doctrine and did not address, to most contemporaries' eyes, the problems confronting the United States. Apart from a brief flicker of interest during the first two years of the war, when the German-American Literary Defense Committee and other Germanophile groups distributed his propaganda, Cham-

berlain caused barely a ripple on the American intellectual scene. As John Higham has argued, Americans by and large were not reading European racists in these years; they generated their own racial literature, tailored to specific conflicts in North America, without transatlantic inspiration.[24]

After 1918 Chamberlain was forgotten for a while in Britain and the United States. At his death the English press contained several bitter obituaries, focussing especially upon his chauvinistic propaganda for Germany during the First World War, but it was not really until after the Nazis came to power that interest in his career and writings revived. From then on it was Chamberlain's role as a forerunner of National Socialist ideology that preoccupied writers and the *Foundations* was interpreted not as an expression of Wilhelminian *Weltpolitik* but as a book that shaped the views of Hitler and Rosenberg and anticipated Nazi racialism.